

**Draft Evaluation of
Proposed and Existing
AREAS OF CRITICAL
ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN**

**for the
Uncompahgre
Planning Area**

JUNE 2010



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACRONYM OR ABBREVIATION	COMPLETE PHRASE
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CNAP	Colorado Natural Areas Program
CNHP	Colorado Natural Heritage Program
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
GUSG	Gunnison sage grouse
IBA	Important Bird Area
NCA	National Conservation Area
ONA	Outstanding Natural Area
PCA	Potential Conservation Area
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RNA	Research Natural Area
SWCR	Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat
UFO	Uncompahgre Field Office
USFS	United States Forest Service
WCC	Western Colorado Congress
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSERC	Western Slope Environmental Resource Council

1.0 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the land use planning process for the Uncompahgre Resource Management Plan (RMP), a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) interdisciplinary team reviewed twenty-two proposals of lands identified for special designation as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). Eleven nominations were submitted by external sources (including other agencies and the public), seven were submitted internally (by BLM specialists), and four are existing ACECs. The team analyzed the twenty-two areas to determine whether they 1) are within the planning area and 2) contain values that meet the relevance and importance criteria for consideration as potential ACECs.

This report presents the evaluation forms used by the BLM to evaluate all existing and proposed ACECs. Nineteen areas were found to meet the relevance and importance criteria. Areas found to meet the relevance and importance criteria are identified as potential ACECs and will be fully considered for designation and management in the RMP.

The BLM dropped from further ACEC consideration areas that were found not to meet the relevance and importance criteria.

2.0 - INTRODUCTION

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and BLM Manual 1613 require the BLM to give priority to the designation and protection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) during the land use planning process. The BLM Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) is currently revising the 1985 San Juan/San Miguel and 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMPs. The Uncompahgre RMP will provide a single, comprehensive land use plan that will guide management of public land within the Uncompahgre Planning Area (planning area) administered by the UFO. Only the public lands and federal mineral estate managed by BLM within the planning area are the subjects of this document.

The planning area is in southwestern Colorado (as shown in Map 1) and consists of the UFO, excluding the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (NCA) and the Dominguez-Escalante NCA. Within the planning area, the BLM administers approximately 675,677 acres of public surface land and 2,234,662 acres of federal mineral estate in Montrose, Delta, Gunnison, Ouray, San Miguel, and Mesa counties.

The analysis and findings for ACEC relevance and importance criteria was completed in accordance with FLPMA Section 202 (43 US Code 1712[c][3]), 43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.7-2, and BLM Manual 1613 (BLM 1988a).

2.1 Area of Critical Environmental Concern

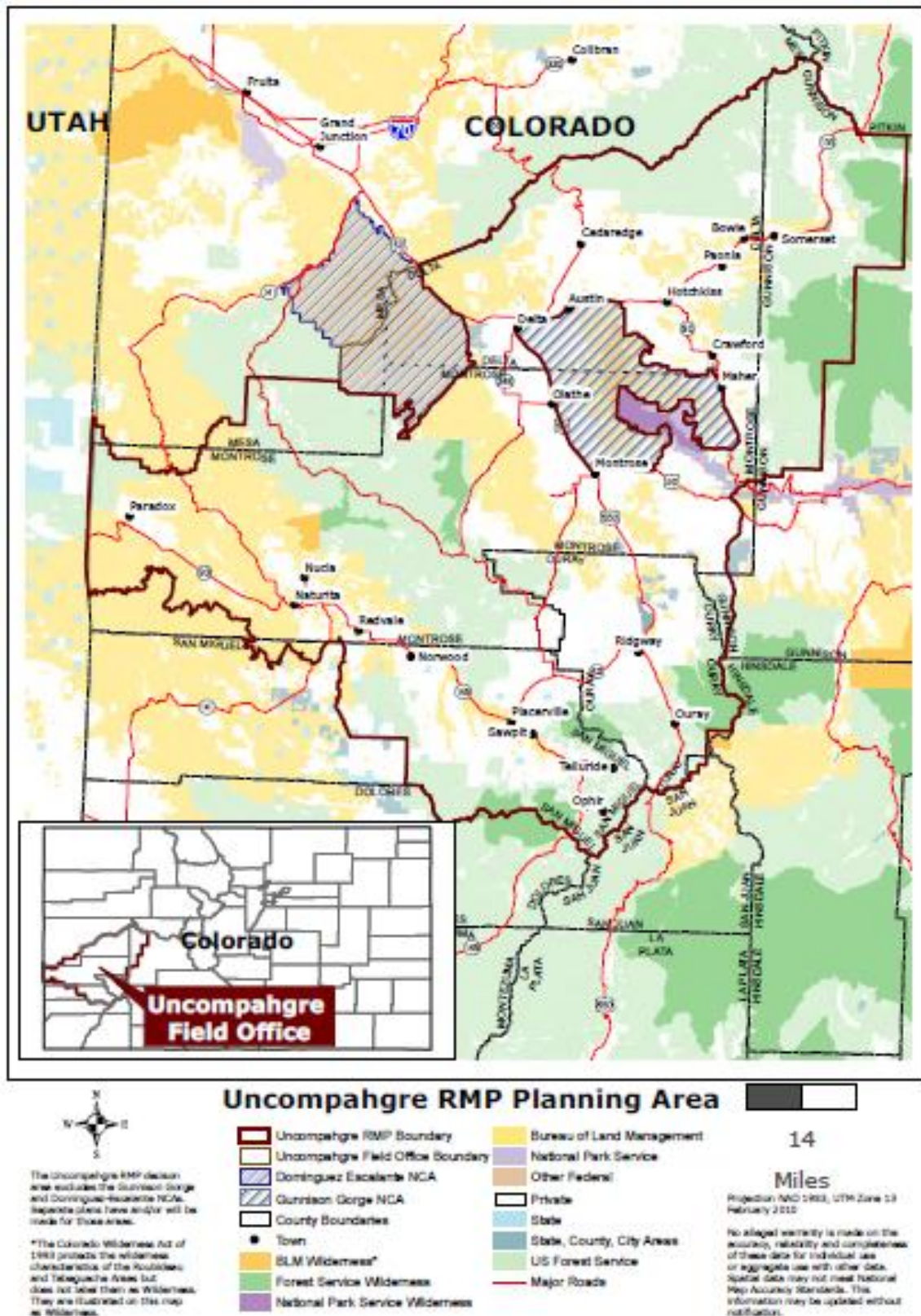
An ACEC is an area of BLM-administered land where special management attention is needed to protect its relevant and important values (as detailed in Section 3.2) from irreparable damage. ACECs are an administrative designation made by BLM through a land use plan. It is unique to BLM in that no other agency uses this form of designation.

2.2 Special Management Attention

Special management attention refers to management prescriptions developed during RMP preparation expressly to protect the important and relevant values of an area from the potential effects of actions permitted by the RMP, including proposed actions deemed to be in conformance with the terms, conditions, and decisions of the RMP (BLM Manual 1613.12). These are management measures that would not be necessary or prescribed if the critical and important features were not present.

INTRODUCTION

Map I - Uncompahgre RMP Planning Area



3.0 - STEPS IN THE ACEC PROCESS

This section summarizes the major steps in the identification and evaluation of ACECs.

3.1 Nomination

BLM staff, other agencies, or members of the public may nominate ACECs at any time, but they are only designated during the BLM land use planning process. In addition, existing ACECs are reconsidered.

During the scoping period for the RMP revision, the UFO solicited ACEC nominations from the public. At public meetings, the UFO showed a **Special Management Areas** display panel and distributed a fact sheet providing information on what ACECs are, along with a map showing current ACECs in the UFO. The fact sheet and map were also made available on the planning webpage: (http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ufo/uncompahgre_rmp.html). The fact sheet and display panel are shown in Appendix A and B of this report. In addition to providing information on ACECs, the fact sheet stated:

The BLM wants your input... Do you know of any areas within the planning area that meet the criteria for becoming an ACEC? Any individual or organization may nominate an ACEC during the public scoping period. The nomination should describe the area's special values. Information on why the area meets relevance and importance criteria (43 CFR 1610.7-2) must be included in the nomination.

3.2 Relevance and Importance Criteria

Nominations for ACECs must meet criteria of **relevance** and **importance** as defined in 43 CFR 1610.7-2. This report considers only these criteria, and does not discuss management prescriptions. Relevance and importance are further defined in BLM Manual 1613.1 as follows.

Relevance

Areas meeting the relevance criterion possess “significant historic, cultural, or scenic value; a fish or wildlife resource or other natural system or process; or natural hazard.”

An area meets the relevance criterion if it contains *one or more* of the following:

1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).
2. A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).

STEPS IN THE ACEC PROCESS

3. A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).
4. Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the resource management planning process that it has become part of a natural process.

An area also meets the criteria for relevance if it contains a plant species or community ranked G1 through G3 or S1 through S3 by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). CNHP rankings are defined in Table I on the following page.

Importance

To meet the importance criterion, the value, resource, system, process or hazard resource must “have substantial significance and value.” This generally requires qualities of more than local significance and special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource, or qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change. A natural hazard can be important if it is a significant threat to human life or property.

An area meets the importance criterion if *one or more* of the following characteristics are present:

1. Has more than locally significant qualities that give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.
2. Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.
3. Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).
4. Has qualities that warrant highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.
5. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

Table 1 - Colorado Natural Heritage Program Element Imperilment Rankings

CNHP GLOBAL RARITY RANKING (based on the range-wide status of a species)	
G1	Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences, or very few remaining individuals), or because of some factor of its biology making it especially vulnerable to extinction. (Critically endangered throughout its range).
G2	Imperiled globally because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences), or because of other factors demonstrably making it very vulnerable to extinction throughout its range. (Endangered throughout its range).
G3	Very rare or local throughout its range or found locally in a restricted range (21 to 100 occurrences). (Threatened throughout its range.)
G4	Apparently secure globally, though it might be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
G5	Demonstrably secure globally, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
CNHP STATE RARITY RANKING (based on status of species [relative abundance of individuals] in each state)	
S1	Critically imperiled in state because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences, or very few remaining individuals), or because of some factor of its biology making it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the state. (Critically endangered in state).
S2	Imperiled in state because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences), or because of other factors demonstrably making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the state. (Endangered or threatened in state).
S3	Rare in state (21 to 100 occurrences).

3.3 Consideration of Potential ACECs

Each area meeting the relevance and importance criteria must be identified as a potential ACEC and must be considered as RMP alternatives are developed. Each potential ACEC must be proposed for designation in at least one alternative in the Draft RMP (BLM Manual 1613.2.22B). As RMP alternatives are developed, management prescriptions are fully developed. Management prescriptions **may** (not must) vary across the alternatives.

3.4 Comments on Proposed ACECs

The public has the opportunity to comment on the designation recommendations included in this draft report, and the public may comment on any aspect of the ACEC analysis. The comments are considered prior to finalizing the report. The public will also have the

STEPS IN THE ACEC PROCESS

opportunity to comment on the draft RMP.

3.5 Designation

Designation of ACECs occurs when the record of decision for the EIS is signed and the RMP is approved.

4.0 - ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

This section describes each existing and proposed area and provides an evaluation of whether or not it meets the criteria for relevance and importance. Map 2 on page 10 shows all existing and proposed ACECs. Map 3 on page 11 shows areas that meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria, and therefore are identified as potential ACECs. A description, evaluation, and map of each proposed area follows.

4.1 Existing and Proposed ACECs Considered

The following table shows ACECs that the BLM is considering; those in existence under the current RMPs, and those being proposed by the BLM and public. The table also shows whether an existing or proposed ACEC meets the relevance and importance criteria.

Table 2 - Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area

PAGE No.	ACEC NAME	STATUS	RELEVANT AND IMPORTANT?	RELEVANCE CRITERIA	IMPORTANCE CRITERIA	NOTES
9	Needle Rock Outstanding Natural Area/ACEC	Existing	Yes	1, 3	1, 2, 3	
12	Adobe Badlands Outstanding Natural Area/ACEC	Existing	Yes	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	
15	Salt Desert Shrub Ecosystem Research Natural Area/ACEC	BLM Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	Includes existing Adobe Badlands Outstanding Natural Area/ACEC
18	Fairview Research Natural Area/ACEC	Existing	Yes	3	1, 2, 3	
21	South Fairview Research Natural Area/ACEC	BLM Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	Includes existing Fairview Research Natural Area/ACEC
24	South Fairview Research Natural Area/ACEC, with CNHP Expansion	External Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	Includes existing Fairview Research Natural Area/ACEC
28	Roubideau	BLM Proposal	Yes	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

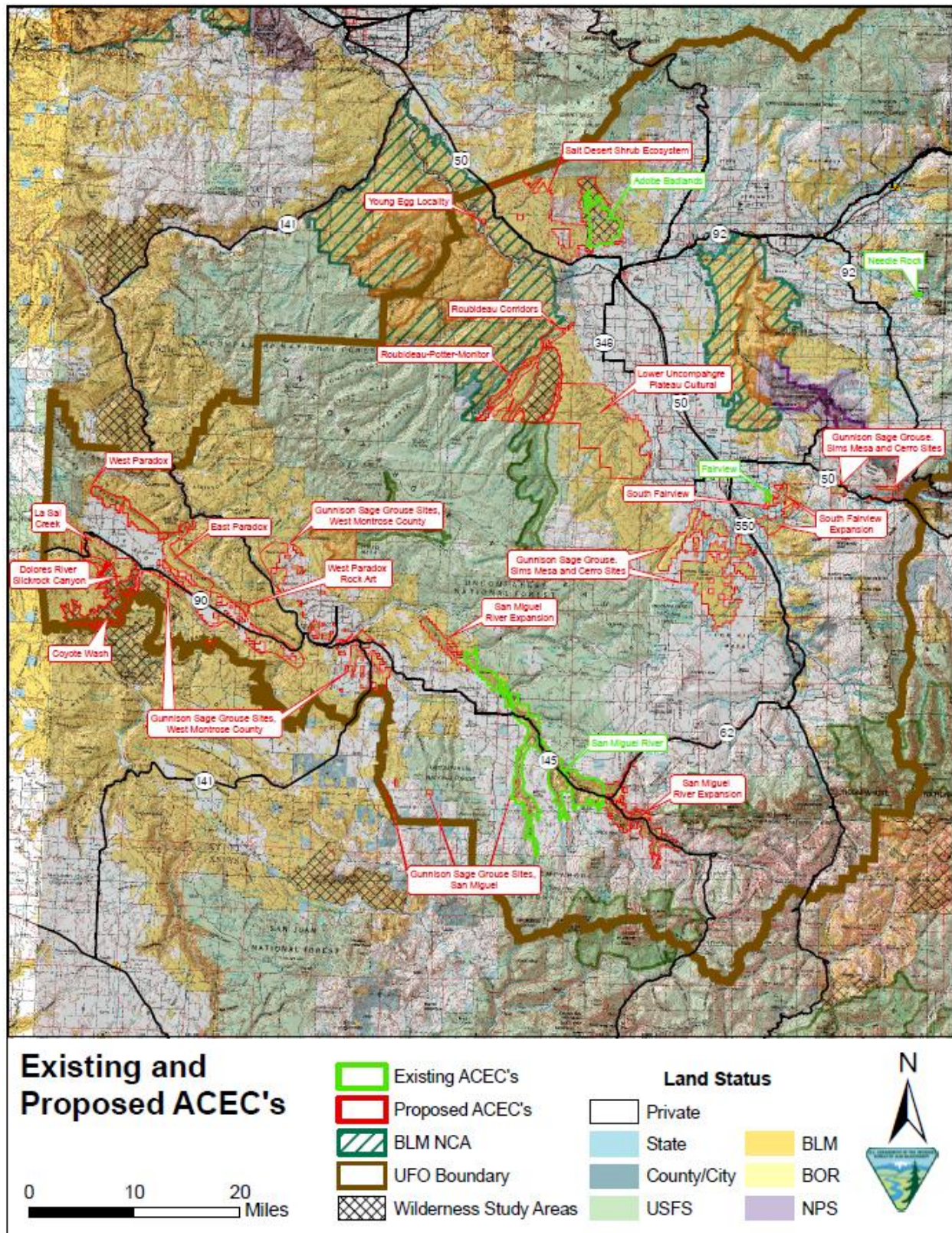
PAGE NO.	ACEC NAME	STATUS	RELEVANT AND IMPORTANT?	RELEVANCE CRITERIA	IMPORTANCE CRITERIA	NOTES
	Corridors ACEC					
31	Roubideau-Potter-Monitor ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	
35	Lower Uncompahgre Plateau Cultural ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	1	1, 2	
37	San Miguel River ACEC	Existing	Yes	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	
40	San Miguel River ACEC with Addition	BLM and External Proposal	Yes	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	Includes existing San Miguel River ACEC
43	Gunnison Sage Grouse Sites San Miguel ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	2	1, 2, 3	
46	Gunnison Sage Grouse Sites West Montrose County ACEC	External Proposal	No	2	1, 2, 3	
49	Gunnison Sage Grouse, Sims Mesa and Cerro Sites ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	2	1, 2, 3	
52	Dolores River Slickrock Canyon ACEC	BLM Proposal	Yes	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3	
56	La Sal Creek ACEC	External Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	
59	Coyote Wash ACEC	External Proposal				Within proposed Dolores River Slickrock Canyon ACEC - will not be considered
61	East Paradox ACEC	BLM Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

PAGE NO.	ACEC NAME	STATUS	RELEVANT AND IMPORTANT?	RELEVANCE CRITERIA	IMPORTANCE CRITERIA	NOTES
65	West Paradox ACEC	BLM Proposal	Yes	2, 3	1, 2, 3	
68	Paradox Long Valley (West Paradox Rock Art)	External Proposal	Yes	1	1, 2	
71	Tabeguache Pueblo and Tabeguache Caves	External Proposal	Yes	1	1, 2	
73	Young Egg Locality	External Proposal				Within Dominguez-Escalante NCA - will not be considered

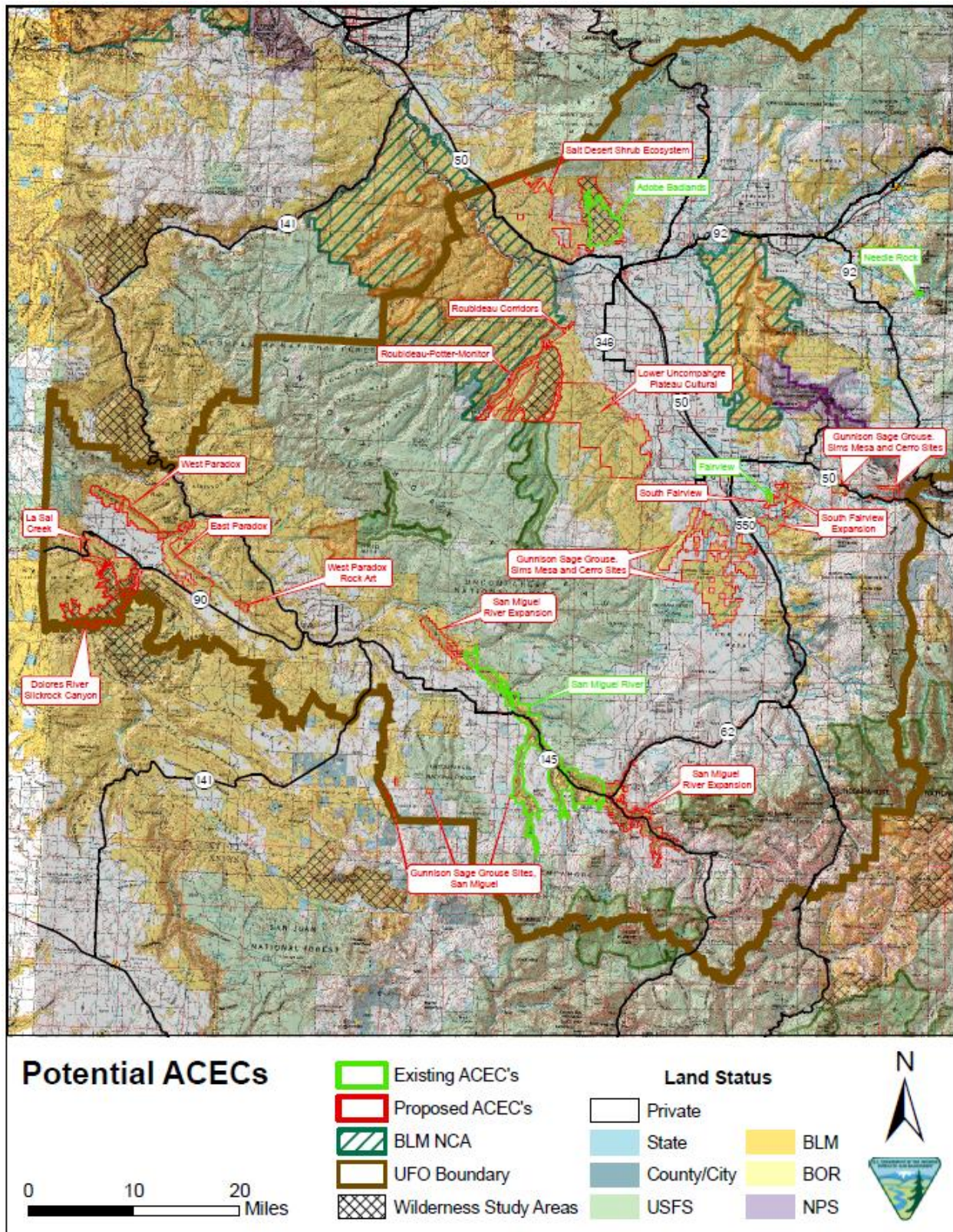
ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

Map 2 - Existing and Proposed ACECs in the Planning Area



ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

Map 3 - Potential ACECs in the Uncompahgre Planning Area



I. NEEDLE ROCK ONA/ACEC

Status: Existing

General Location: Delta County, approximately four miles southeast of Crawford, Colorado, north of the Smith Fork River, and south of Missouri Flats.

Acreage: 83

Significance: The Needle Rock Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) and ACEC consists mainly of a volcanic geological structure with high-value scientific, interpretive, and scenic characteristics. The isolated structure is the remaining core of a tertiary volcano.

General Description: This 80-acre site located about four miles northeast of Crawford, Colorado was designated in the 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP as the Needle Rock ONA/ACEC. The spectacular volcanic formation rises almost 1,000 feet above the Smith Fork River Valley. The area is managed to protect the scientific and scenic qualities of the site.

Values Assessed: Natural System: *Rare Geological Feature*
Scenic

Relevance Criteria Considered: 1 and 3

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

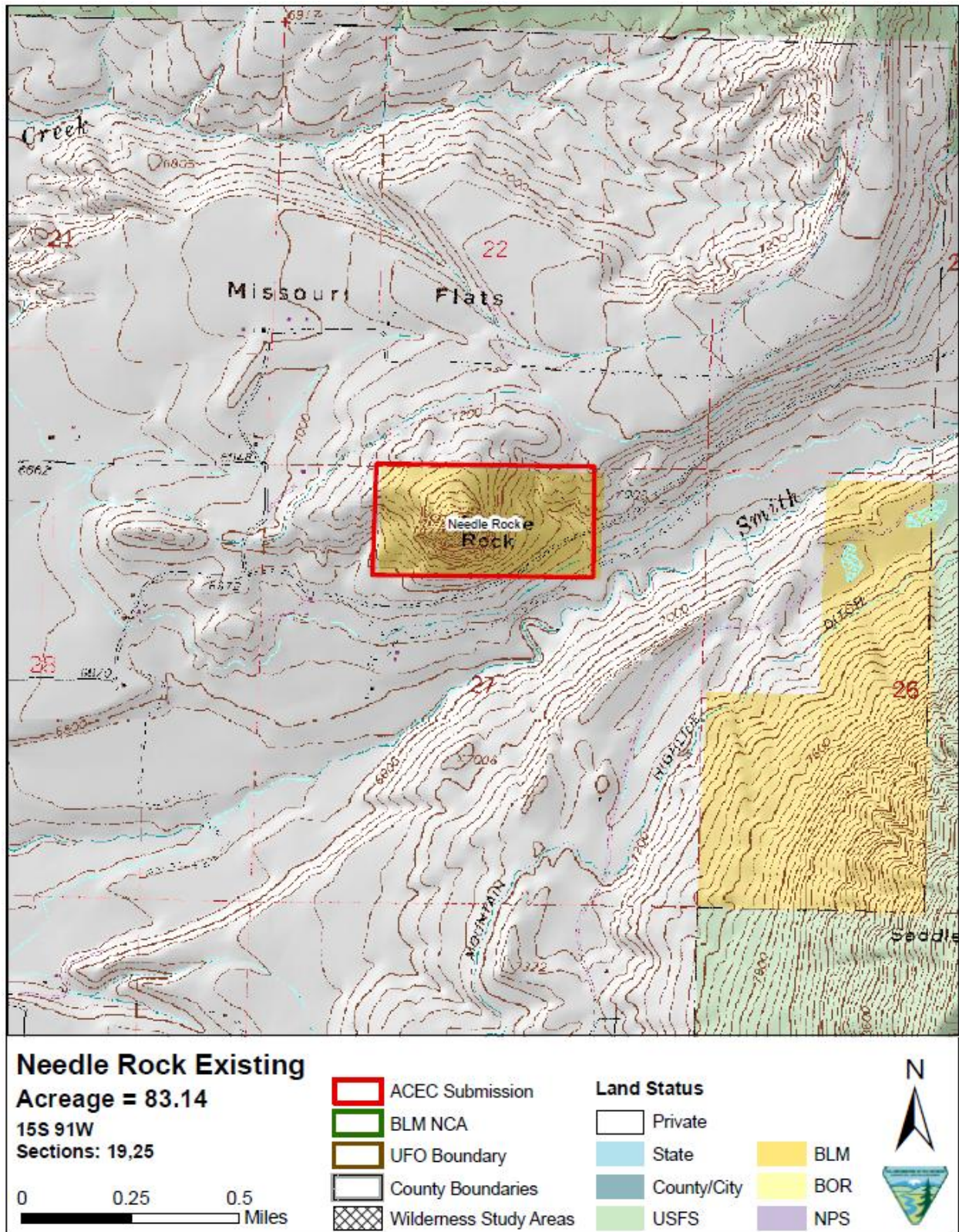
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The ACEC is within a Scenic Quality Class A area, and the volcanic neck is an iconic symbol for the North Fork of the Gunnison region.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Needle Rock is an outstanding example of a rare volcanic neck.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area has regional interest and is a tourist attraction.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The fragile volcanic neck is eroding and is susceptible to damage by visitors.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The area was designated as a BLM Instant Study Area, which was pre-FLPMA. Part of CNAP October 1992.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map I - Needle Rock ONA/ACEC (Existing)



2. ADOBE BADLANDS ONA/ACEC

Status: Existing

General Location: Delta County, approximately three miles northwest of Delta, Colorado.

Acreage: 6,383

Significance: The Adobe Badlands ONA and ACEC consists of Mancos shale hills and flats which, through wind and water erosion, have formed unique scenic formations. The area's soils are highly erodible and saline, resulting in high sediment loads and very saline runoff. The area also contains known and potential habitat for several federally listed endangered and threatened plant species.

General Description: The 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP designated the area located approximately three miles northwest of Delta, Colorado, as the Adobe Badlands ONA/ACEC. The area is managed to protect its unique scenic qualities, improve threatened and endangered species habitat, and reduce active erosion. The ACEC contains occupied habitat for the threatened Colorado hookless cactus, BLM Sensitive adobe penstemon, and other native plants. The BLM Sensitive white-tailed prairie dog and kit fox inhabit the area.

Values Assessed:

- Botanical: *Federally Threatened Species*
- Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*
- Scenic
- Natural Process: *Highly Erodible Soils*

Relevance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	No	The area is not significantly different than other Mancos shale areas.
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species biodiversity).	Yes	Two BLM-sensitive animal species (white-tailed prairie dog and kit fox) inhabit the area.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Colorado hookless cactus and adobe penstemon, which are rare and endemic sensitive plants, occupy the area.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Adobe Badlands is listed in state and regional hiking guide books because of its scenic formations.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Adobe Badlands is within an adobe roadless area, which is vulnerable to adverse change (highly susceptible to erosion) without special management. Nearby private lands pose a threat of illegal off road recreation, dumping, and other damaging uses. Saline soils are vulnerable to adverse change, in the form of increased erosion.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The area has been an ACEC since 1989, and is within an area designated as a WSA in 1992.

3. SALT DESERT SHRUB ECOSYSTEM RNA/PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Proposed

Proponent: BLM (includes the CNHP Wells Gulch PCA)

General Location: Delta County, northwest of Delta, Colorado; north and east of highway 50, and south of the Grand Mesa National Forest.

Acreage: 34,548 (including 6,383 for existing Adobe Badlands ONA/ACEC)

Significance: The proposed ACEC contains a core population of the threatened Colorado hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus glaucus*), cold desert shrubland communities (locally imperiled), white-tailed prairie dog and burrowing owl (both BLM sensitive species). This ecosystem is easily disturbed and difficult to restore.

General Description: This broad, gently sloping shrub/grassland covers a large area east of the Gunnison River in western Delta County. The existing Adobe Badlands ACEC lies within part of the proposed ACEC. Vegetation in much of the area is characterized by shadscale with galleta grass, except on north facing slopes where the dominant grass is salina wildrye. The area also has two occurrences of globally vulnerable to globally secure (G3G5) and locally imperiled (G3/S2) cold desert shrubland communities.

The area contains significant populations of the threatened Colorado hookless cactus (G3/S3; globally and locally vulnerable), as well as BLM Sensitive species (white-tailed prairie dog, burrowing owl). The area is suitable habitat for and may have populations of BLM Sensitive species kit fox (G4/S1; globally secure, locally critically imperiled), and ferruginous hawk (G4/S3B; locally vulnerable).

The large-flowered breadroot is frequent over a large area, usually on the edges of dry washes, but never very abundant in any one place. Associated species included spiny greasewood, low rabbitbrush, snakeweed, prince's plume, Mormon tea, twin bladderpod, Easter daisy, Indian paintbrush, thrift mock goldenweed, and hairy golden aster.

The hills are quite free of weeds, except for some cheatgrass. Low lying swales are dominated by greasewood, with seabligh and winterfat. Low areas tend to be more weedy, with cheatgrass and halogeton.

The clay soils derived from Mancos shale, with scattered basalt pebbles and cobbles on the surface, were also typical of other sites.

The area has a Biodiversity Significance Rank of B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Values Assessed: Botanical: *Federally Endangered and Threatened Species*
Fish and Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*

Relevance Criteria Considered: 2 and 3

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

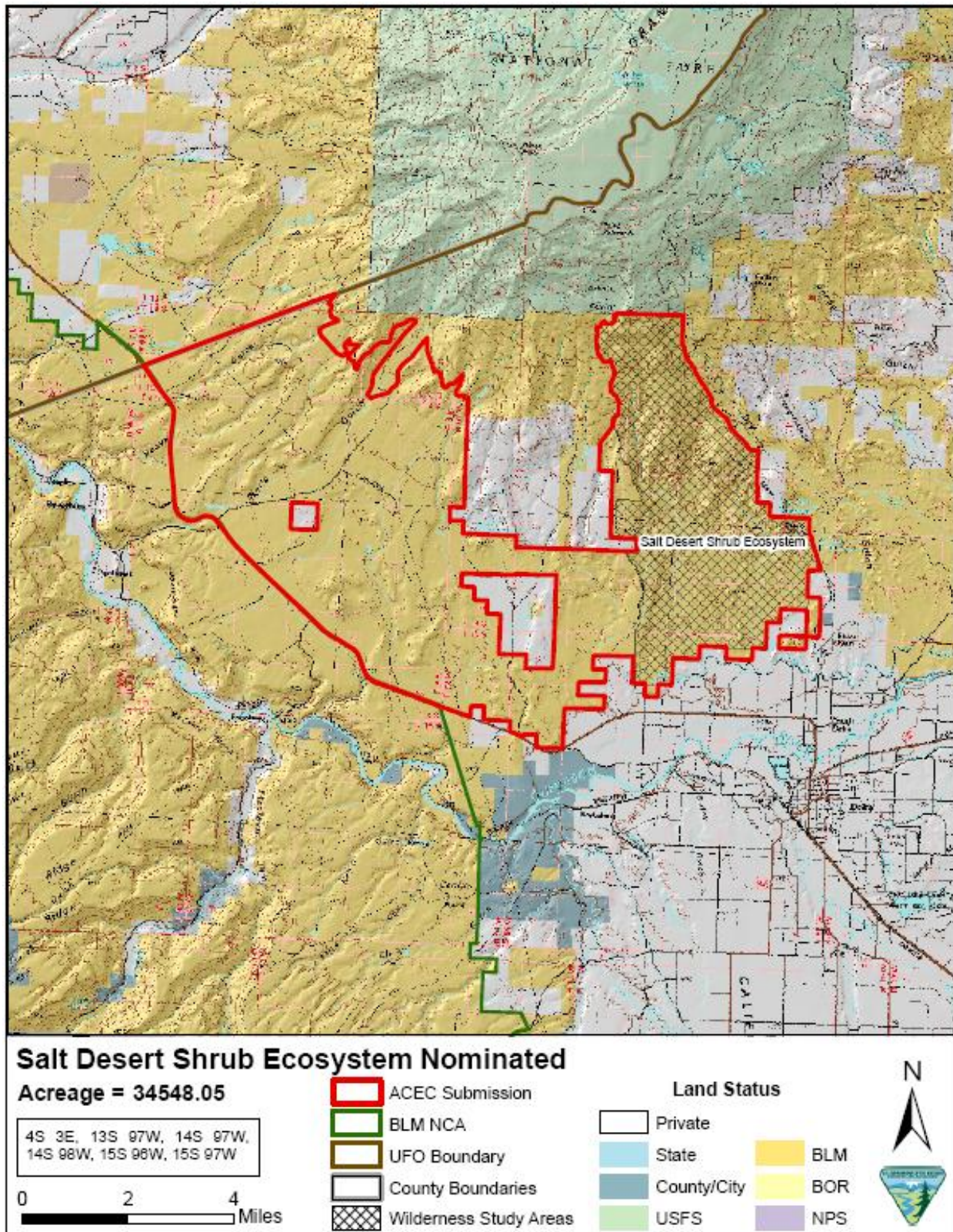
ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	There is habitat for the following BLM Sensitive species: white-tailed prairie dog, burrowing owl, kit fox, and ferruginous hawk, pronghorn antelope
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Much of the known populations of the endemic and Federally listed Colorado hookless cactus are located in this area. The salt desert shrubland ecosystem is easily disturbed and difficult to restore. CNHP considers salt desert shrubland in the area to be globally vulnerable and locally imperiled (G3/S2).

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Adobe soils, within a selenium program management area; endemic plant species; significant populations of a Federally listed threatened and endemic species (Colorado hookless cactus)
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Salt desert shrubland is ranked as globally vulnerable and locally imperiled (G3/S2). Multiple examples in the area of how difficult this area is to recover from disturbance activities. Multiple sensitive species known or have potential to be in the area.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Possible demonstration area as protected area for cactus and species recovery. Biodiversity Significance Rank of B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 3 - Salt Desert Shrub Ecosystem RNA/Proposed ACEC



4. FAIRVIEW RNA/ACEC

Status: Existing

General Location: Approximately four miles southeast of Montrose, Colorado, and about 3.5 miles east of highway 550.

Acreage: 213

Significance of the Existing ACEC: The existing Research Natural Area (RNA) and ACEC contains a significant portion of one of the largest populations of the federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*).

Description: The 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP designated the Fairview RNA/ACEC. The ACEC has two tracts. The south tract (213 acres) is the subject of this evaluation, and is located about four miles southeast of Montrose. The north tract is in the Gunnison Gorge NCA planning area, and was re-designated with the NCA RMP in 2002. South Fairview contains a large population of clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*). This species is endemic to the Adobe badlands of Montrose and Delta counties, with the known range restricted to less than 35 square miles.

South Fairview also contains native plant communities representative of the sparsely vegetated adobe badlands and a population of the BLM sensitive species adobe beardtongue (*Penstemon retrorsus*).

Values Assessed: Botanical: *Endangered and BLM Sensitive Species*

Relevance Criteria Considered: 3

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

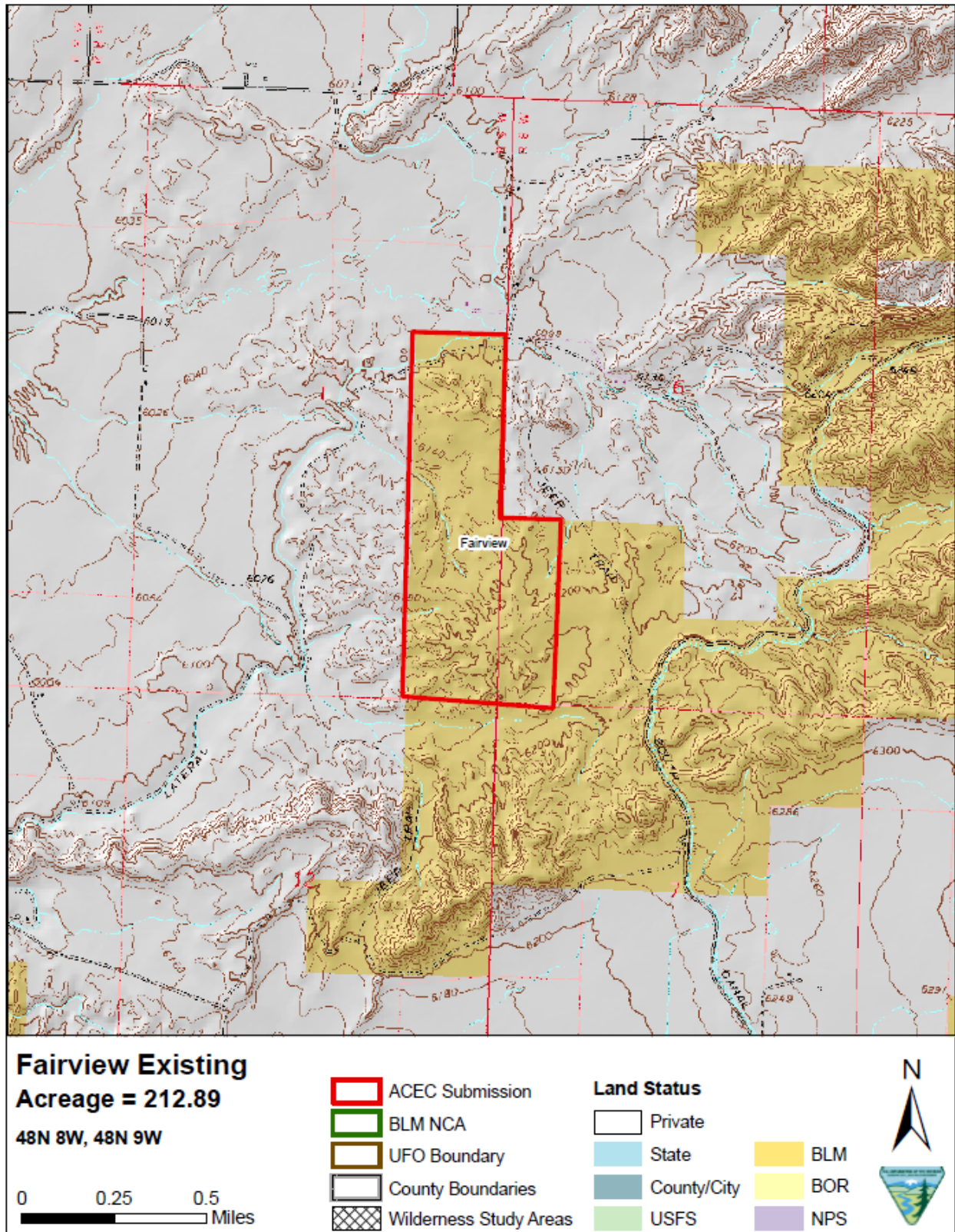
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area contains populations of the federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum pelinophilum</i>).

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area contains a significant portion of one of the largest populations of the federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum pelinophilum</i>), a G1/S1 species.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The endangered clay loving buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum pelinophilum</i>) is vulnerable to adverse change.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The area is an existing BLM ACEC, within a recommended CNHP PCA. The US Fish and Wildlife Service could potentially designate habitat in the area as critical habitat for clay-loving buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum pelinophilum</i>).

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 4 - Fairview RNA/ACEC (Existing)



5. SOUTH FAIRVIEW RNA/PROPOSED ACEC EXPANSION

Status: Existing, with proposed additional area

Proponent: BLM

General Location: Approximately four miles southeast of Montrose, Colorado; about 3.5 miles east of highway 550, and west of South Canal.

Acreage: 367

Significance of the Proposed ACEC: The existing Fairview Research Natural Area (RNA) and ACEC contains a significant portion of one of the largest populations of the federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*) and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of adobe beardtongue (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*), which is a BLM sensitive species and globally vulnerable (G3/S3).

Description: The 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP designated the Fairview RNA/ACEC. The ACEC has two tracts. The south tract (213 acres) is located about four miles southeast of Montrose, and is a part of this proposed ACEC. The north tract is in the Gunnison Gorge NCA planning area, and was re-designated with the NCA RMP in 2002. South Fairview contains a large population of a listed endangered species and significant populations of a candidate species (white-tailed prairie dog). Since designation of the South Fairview RNA ACEC, additional dense populations of clay-loving wild buckwheat have been discovered to the south. In addition, populations of this species have been receiving increasing pressures from development both on and off BLM lands. Much of the potential suitable habitat for clay-loving wild buckwheat is located on private lands and has either been developed or may be developed in the future.

The area has a Biodiversity Significance Rank of B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance.

This site has gentle to steep adobe hills, derived from Mancos shale. The South Canal, with an adjacent service road, is the east boundary of the proposed ACEC. Part of the BLM land has been designated a Research Natural Area. Vegetation consists of desert shrub communities, with greasewood in the bottoms and shadscale and mat saltbush on hillsides. Plants frequently found associated with the clay-loving wild buckwheat and the adobe beardtongue are black sagebrush, woody aster, Gardner saltbush, and bottlebrush squirreltail.

Values Assessed: Botanical: *Federally Endangered and BLM Sensitive Species*
Fish and Wildlife: *Federal Candidate Species*

Relevance Criteria Considered: 2 and 3

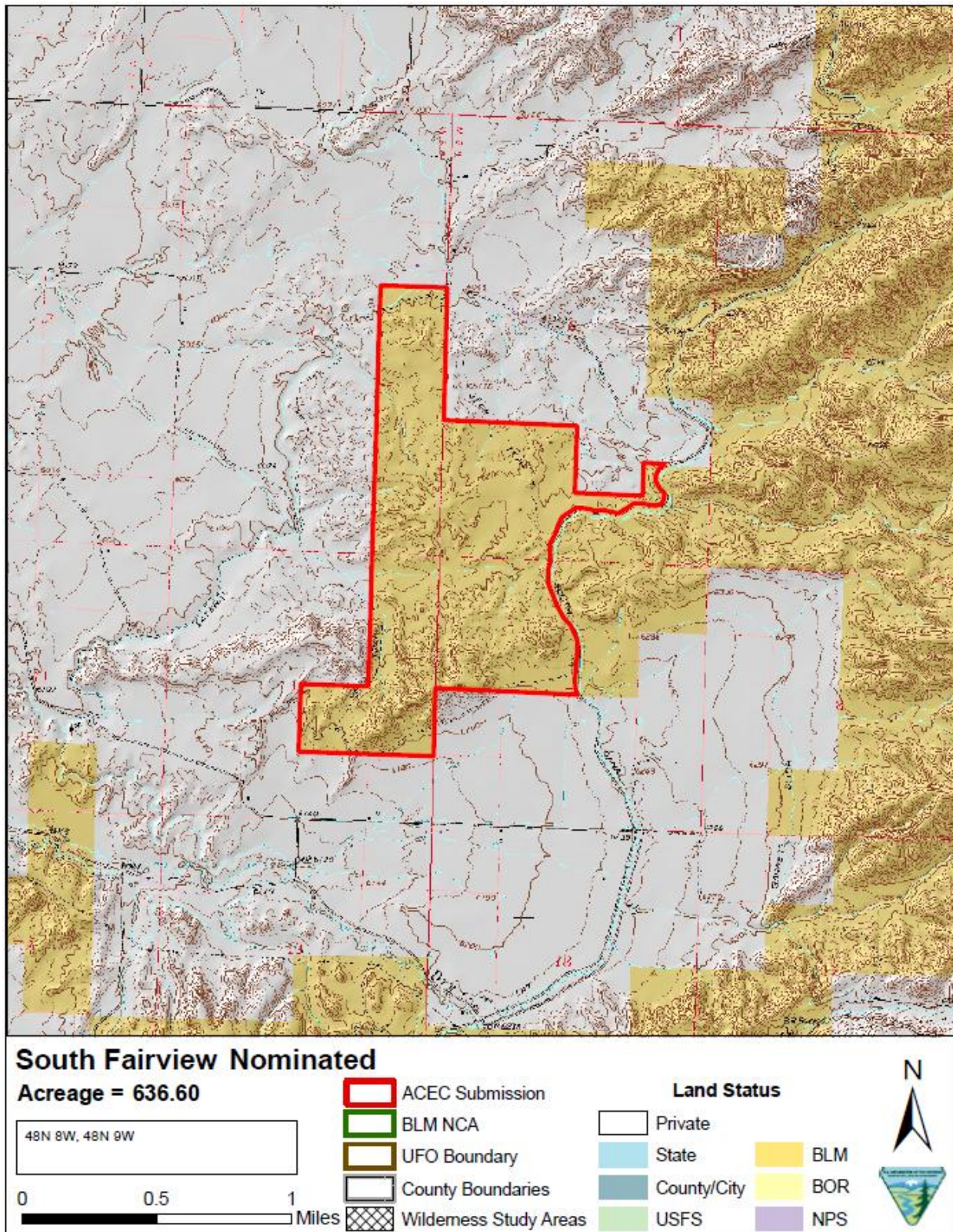
Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species biodiversity).	Yes	The area has white-tailed prairie dog habitat (a BLM Sensitive species that has been petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act).
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	There are clay-loving wild buckwheat (endangered) populations including areas of seedling generation (which is a rare occurrence). The area also has occurrences of Colorado desert Parsley (a BLM Sensitive) and other rare plants.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area has adobe soils, significant populations of a federally listed endangered and endemic species (clay-loving wild buckwheat).
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Clay-loving wild buckwheat (endangered) populations are endemic to area; highest densities of buckwheat are in the proposed additions; threats to clay-loving wild buckwheat have been described as threats from development.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Part of the proposed area is in an existing ACEC. Threats to clay-loving buckwheat are predominantly due to urban development. Much of the historic habitat in the area has been or may be developed. Habitat for the species is becoming restricted to predominantly BLM lands in the UFO. FWS is currently evaluating potential Critical Habitat designation in the area for clay-loving wild buckwheat.

ACEC Map 5 - South Fairview RNA/Proposed ACEC Expansion



6. SOUTH FAIRVIEW RNA/PROPOSED ACEC EXPANSION

Status: Existing, with CNHP-proposed expansion

Proponent: CNHP, Western Slope Environmental Resource Council, Western Colorado Congress, Craig Grother.

General Location: Approximately four to eight miles southeast of Montrose, Colorado; both east and west of South Canal.

Acreage: 4,249

Significance: The existing Fairview RNA and ACEC contains a significant portion of one of the largest populations of the federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*).

The Dry Cedar Creek area contains an occurrence of the federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*); Colorado desert parsley (*Lomatium concinnum*), which is a BLM sensitive species and globally imperiled; beardtongue (*Penstemon retrorsus*) and good-neighbor bladderpod (*Lesquerella vicina*), which are both globally vulnerable.

The South Canal area contains an excellent occurrence of the federally endangered clay-loving wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*) and the globally vulnerable adobe beardtongue (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*).

Description: The 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP designated the Fairview RNA/ACEC. The ACEC has two tracts. The south tract (213 acres) is located about four miles southeast of Montrose, and is a part of this proposed ACEC. The north tract is in the Gunnison Gorge NCA planning area, and was re-designated with the NCA RMP in 2002. Fairview contains a large population of a listed endangered species and significant populations of a candidate species. Since designation of the South Fairview RNA ACEC, additional dense populations of clay-loving wild buckwheat have been discovered to the south. In addition, populations of this species have been receiving increasing pressures from development both on and off BLM lands. Much of the potential suitable habitat for clay-loving wild buckwheat is located on private lands and has either been developed or may be develop in the future.

The area had a Biodiversity Significance Rank of B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance.

From the CNHP PCA descriptions for Dry Cedar Creek and South Canal areas:

Dry Cedar Creek

The Dry Cedar Creek area is the southern part of the Uncompahgre Badlands, consisting of adobe hills derived from Mancos shale. The area is mostly BLM land and is fragmented by roads, canals, and powerlines. The Dry Cedar Creek area contains an occurrence of the federally endangered clay-loving buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*). The site also contains excellent (A-ranked) and good (B-ranked) occurrences of Colorado desert parsley

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

(*Lomatium concinnum*), which is a BLM sensitive species and globally imperiled (G2G3/S2S3); excellent (A-ranked) and fair (C-ranked) occurrences of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) adobe beardtongue (*Penstemon retrorsus*) and an unranked occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2/S2) good-neighbor bladderpod (*Lesquerella vicina*).

The low hills support sparse vegetation of desert shrub species including greasewood, shadscale, mat saltbush, Gardner saltbush, and black sage. Associated species include galleta, salina wildrye, Indian rice grass, bottlebrush squirreltail, winterfat, prickly pear cactus, yellow milkvetch, and woody aster. Common weeds in the area include cheatgrass and Canada thistle. Scattered Utah juniper occurs in uplands. Soils are clay with some cobbles. The adobe beardtongue was found on lower slopes with black sage, while the Colorado desert-parsley was usually on ridges and in small drainages. The good-neighbor bladderpod was located on a small mesa top next to a water storage tank.

South Canal

The South Canal site has gentle to steep adobe hills, derived from Mancos shale. The South Canal, with an adjacent service road, runs through the site. The area has a mix of private and BLM ownership. This site contains an excellent occurrence of the federally endangered clay-loving wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*) and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) adobe beardtongue (*Penstemon retrorsus*). Additional vegetation consists of desert shrub communities, with greasewood in the bottoms and shadscale and mat saltbush on hillsides. Plants frequently found associated with the clay-loving wild buckwheat and the adobe beardtongue are black sagebrush, woody aster, Gardner saltbush, and bottlebrush squirreltail.

Values Assessed: Botanical: Federally Endangered and Candidate, and BLM Sensitive Species

Relevance Criteria Considered: 2 and 3

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species biodiversity).	Yes	The area contains White-tailed prairie dog habitat (a BLM Sensitive species).

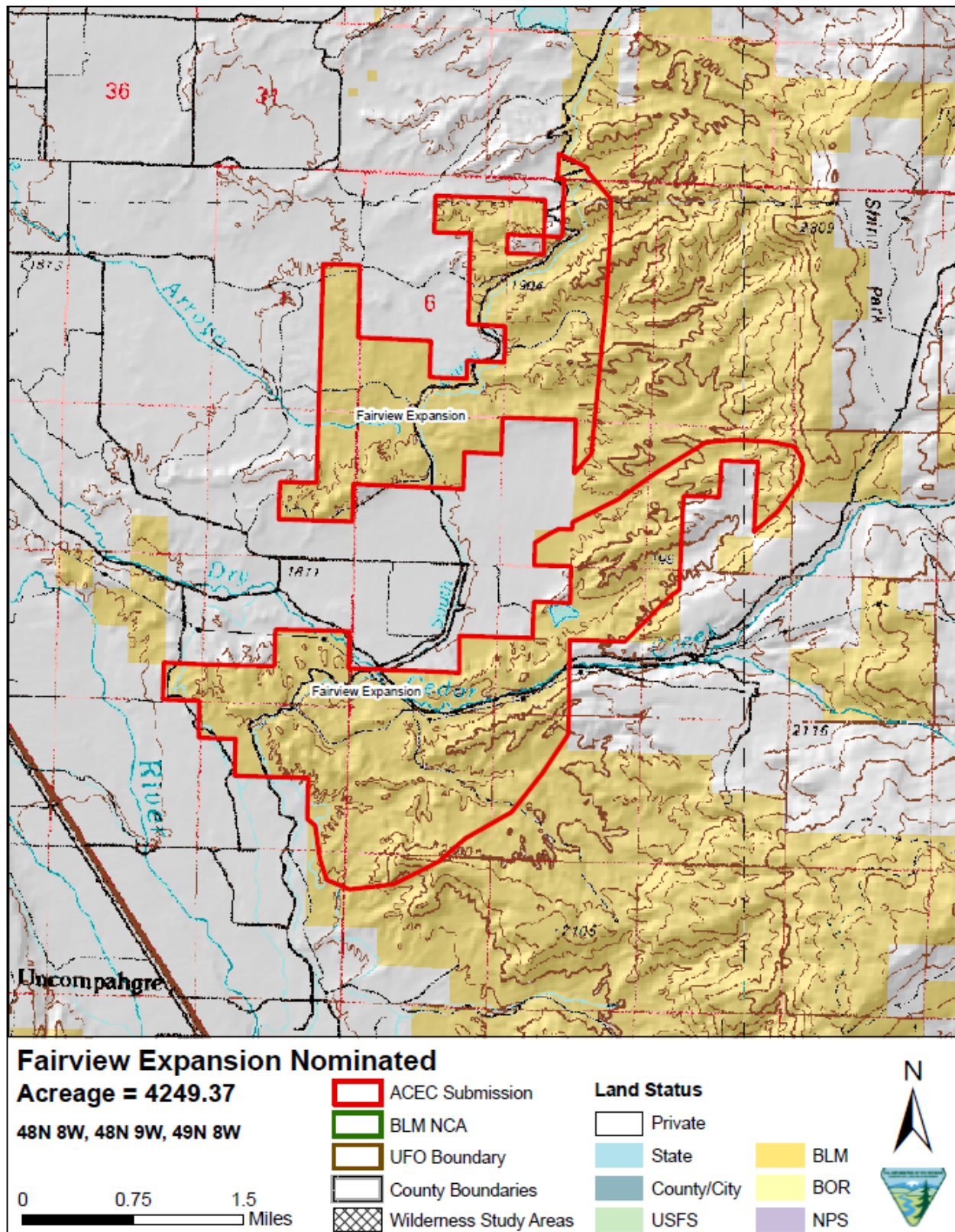
ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	The area has populations of the endangered clay-loving wild buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum pelinophilum</i>), including areas of seedling generation (which is a rare occurrence). The area also has occurrences of Colorado desert Parsley (a BLM Sensitive species) and other rare plants.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area has adobe soils, endemic plant species, and significant populations of a Federally listed endangered species (clay-loving wild buckwheat).
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Clay-loving wild buckwheat (endangered) populations are endemic to area; highest densities of buckwheat are in the proposed additions; threats to clay-loving wild buckwheat have been described as threats from development.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Part of the proposed area is in an existing ACEC. Threats to clay-loving buckwheat are predominantly due to urban development. Much of the historic habitat in the area has been or may be developed. Habitat for the species is becoming restricted to predominantly BLM lands. FWS is currently evaluating the area for Critical Habitat designation for clay-loving wild buckwheat.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 6 - South Fairview RNA/Proposed ACEC Expansion



7. ROUBIDEAU CORRIDORS PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Proposed

Proponent: BLM

General Location: Approximately ten miles southwest of Delta, CO, and eleven miles west of Olathe, CO. Includes Roubideau, Monitor and Potter Creeks and adjacent lands, as well as the Camelback WSA.

Acreage: 14,944

Significance: The canyons and streams have very high biodiversity significance, supporting good and excellent examples of narrowleaf cottonwood/skunkbrush riparian forests, montane and lower montane riparian forests with blue spruce, Douglas fir, narrowleaf cottonwood and red-osier dogwood. The riparian areas also have foothills riparian shrublands characterized by river birch and coyote willow. BLM sensitive species including Grand Junction milkvetch, desert bighorn sheep and northern leopard frog are found there. The canyons form important movement corridors from the desert and Gunnison River up to the forest on the Uncompahgre Plateau. The uplands afford protection to the integrity of the canyons below, and offer additional habitat for bighorn sheep.

Description: The Roubideau Corridors ACEC would be a new ACEC, a large part of which encompasses the Camelback WSA. The new ACEC is based on the Roubideau Creek Potential Conservation Area recommended by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program. The canyons and streams including and surrounding Roubideau Creek are considered to have very high biodiversity significance by the CNHP. They support good and excellent examples of narrowleaf cottonwood/skunkbrush riparian forests, montane and lower montane riparian forests with blue spruce, Douglas fir, narrowleaf cottonwood and red osier dogwood; and foothills riparian shrublands characterized by river birch and coyote willow. In addition, BLM sensitive species including Grand Junction milkvetch, desert bighorn sheep and northern leopard frog are found there. The canyons contain three perennial streams providing available water sources for the bighorn sheep and other wildlife, and also provide important movement corridors from the desert and Gunnison River up to the forest on the Uncompahgre Plateau. These corridors are important for wildlife, and were important for early settlers as well. Several historic structures are found along Roubideau Creek.

Values Assessed:

- Botanical: *Riparian Vegetation and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Fish and Wildlife: *Aquatic and BLM Sensitive Species*
- Historical: *Early settlement*

Relevance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

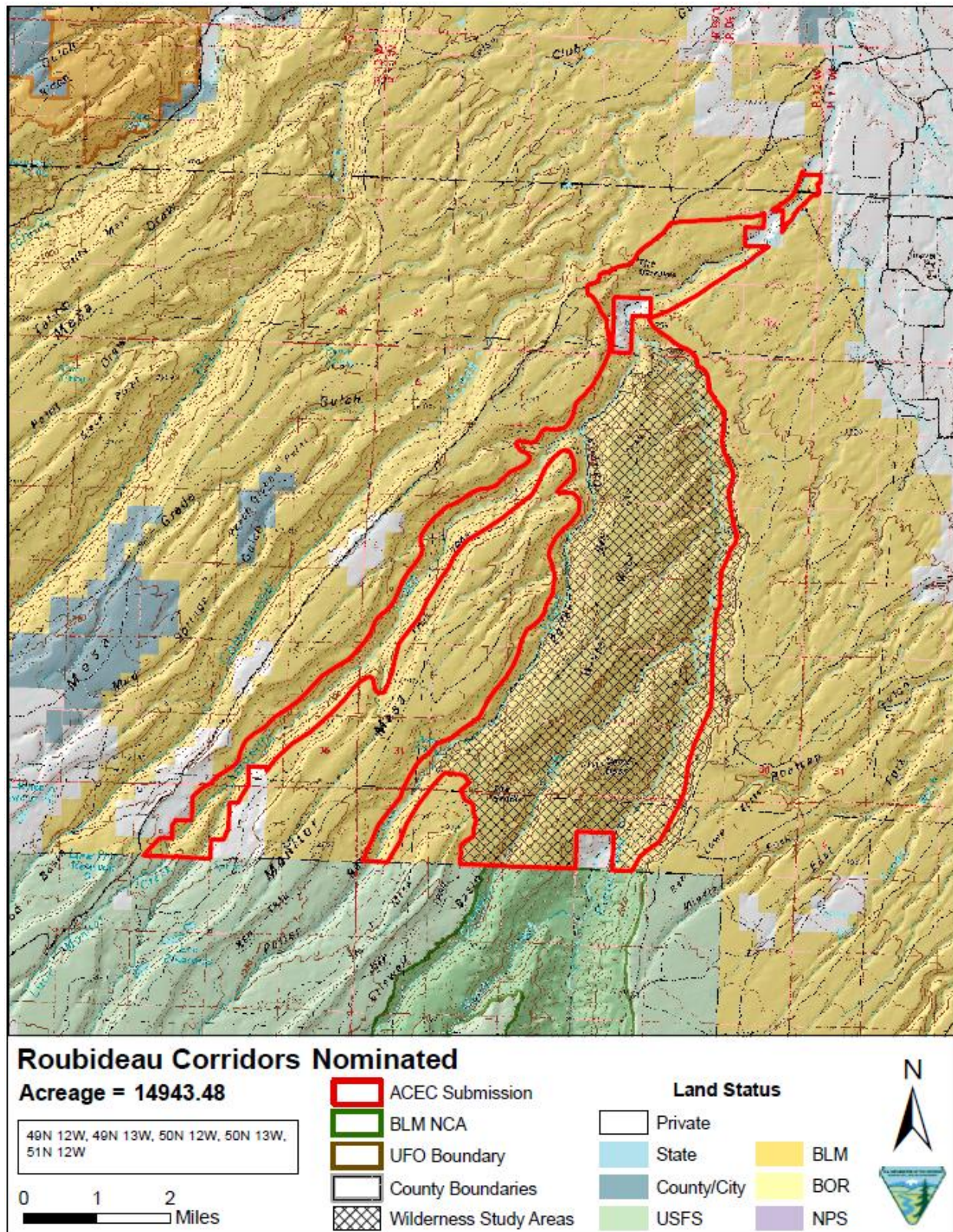
Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The area has historic cabins. There is also historic human and livestock passage from the desert to the high country. Scenic values: VRI Class 2
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	A desert bighorn sheep herd (BLM sensitive species), wildlife movement corridors, northern leopard frog and peregrine falcon (both BLM sensitive species), and golden eagle nests are in the area.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Intact Riparian systems and high quality riparian vegetation are along the creeks. The hydrologic systems are largely intact. Largely roadless, the habitat is not significantly fragmented. Adjacent to a Forest Service congressionally designated "area", which is managed as wilderness.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The riparian vegetation has a CNHP rating of B2 for very high biodiversity (statewide and global significance).
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The riparian areas have good and excellent examples of native riparian communities with overall global rarity. The area also has cultural and historic sites which are vulnerable to change.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Much of the proposed ACEC is within a VSA. It also has globally significant riparian areas, as well as eligible historic/cultural sites.

ACEC Map 7 - Roubideau Corridors Proposed ACEC



8. ROUBIDEAU-POTTER-MONITOR PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Proposed

Proponent: Jim Riddell

General Location: Approximately ten miles southwest of Delta, CO, and eleven miles west of Olathe, CO. Area includes Roubideau and Potter creeks and adjacent lands, as well as lands between the two creeks.

Acreage: 20,502

Significance: The canyons and streams have very high biodiversity significance, supporting good and excellent examples of narrowleaf cottonwood/skunkbrush riparian forests, montane and lower montane riparian forests with blue spruce, Douglas fir, narrowleaf cottonwood and red-osier dogwood. The canyons also have foothills riparian shrublands characterized by river birch and coyote willow. BLM sensitive species including Grand Junction milkvetch, desert bighorn sheep and northern leopard frog are found there. The canyons form important movement corridors from the desert and Gunnison River up to the forest on the Uncompahgre Plateau. The uplands afford protection to the integrity of the canyons below, as well as offer spectacular views down into the canyons and to mountains and mesas in the distance. There are many archaeological and historical sites in the area, including wickiups, petroglyphs, and historic structures.

Description: The Roubideau-Potter-Monitor ACEC would be a new ACEC encompassing all of the Camelback WSA. The new ACEC is based on a portion of the Roubideau Creek Potential Conservation Area recommended by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program. The canyons and streams including and surrounding Roubideau Creek are considered to have very high biodiversity significance by the CNHP. They support good and excellent examples of narrowleaf cottonwood/skunkbrush riparian forests, montane and lower montane riparian forests with blue spruce, Douglas fir, narrowleaf cottonwood and red osier dogwood; and foothills riparian shrublands characterized by river birch and coyote willow. In addition, BLM sensitive species including Grand Junction milkvetch, desert bighorn sheep and northern leopard frog are found there. The canyons contain three perennial streams providing an available water source for the bighorn sheep and other wildlife, and also form important movement corridors from the desert and Gunnison River up to the forest on the Uncompahgre Plateau. These corridors are not only important for wildlife, and were important for early settlers as well. Several historic structures are found along Roubideau Creek. With a depth of 750 to 1,000 feet from the rim to the creeks, the area is geographically configured to offer a sense of isolation for wildlife and human visitors.

While some of this area already enjoys special protection through the Wilderness Study Area designation, the three canyons (Roubideau, Potter and Monitor) offer equally valuable biological resources and wildness, and together form a single canyon system of three branches. The road along Potter Creek initially constrained the boundary of the

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

Camelback WSA; the road was closed to motorized and mechanized travel at the request of DOW soon after the formation of the WSA to protect migration corridors for bighorn sheep in Potter and Monitor Canyons. The road has remained closed for two decades.

Archeological and historical sites abound in this area, including a rare collection of thirteen Ute wikiups, as well as petroglyphs perhaps 6,000 years old and an historic inscription in Roubideau Canyon that may date back to the time of the American Revolution, as well as sheep herder cabins and structures more than 100 years old.

Values Assessed: Botanical: *Riparian Vegetation and BLM Sensitive Species*
 Fish and Wildlife: *Aquatic and BLM Sensitive Species*
 Historical: *Early Settlement*

Relevance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

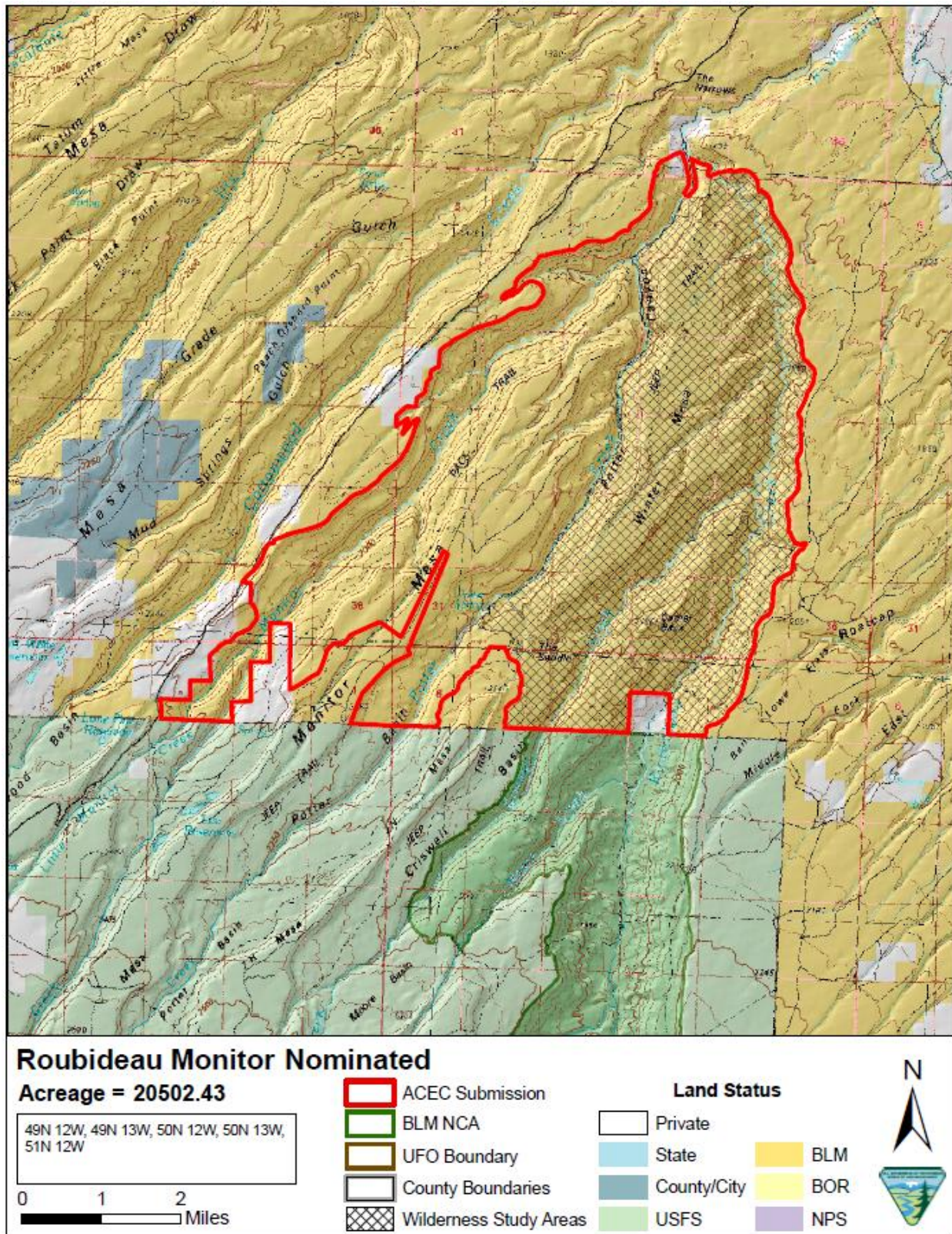
Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The area has historic cabins. There is also historic human and livestock passage from the desert to the high country. Scenic values: VRI Class 2.
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	A desert bighorn sheep herd (BLM sensitive species), wildlife movement corridors, the northern leopard frog (sensitive species), and peregrine falcon (sensitive species), and golden eagle nests are in the area.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Intact riparian systems and high quality riparian vegetation are along the creeks. The hydrologic systems are largely intact. Largely roadless; the habitat is not substantially fragmented. Adjacent to a Forest Service congressionally designated "area," which is managed as wilderness.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The riparian vegetation has a CNHP rating of B2 for very high biodiversity (statewide and global significance).
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The riparian areas have good and excellent examples of native riparian communities with overall global significance. The area also has cultural and historic sites which are vulnerable to change
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Much of the proposed ACEC is within a VSA. It also has globally significant riparian areas, as well as eligible historic/cultural sites.

ACEC Map 8 - Roubideau-Potter-Monitor Proposed ACEC



9. LOWER UNCOMPAHGRE PLATEAU CULTURAL PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Proposed

Proponent: WSERC, WCC

General Location: East side of Uncompahgre Plateau, from about Dry Creek to the east side of the Camelback WSA.

Acreage: 31,923

Significance of the Proposed ACEC: The proposed ACEC contains important rock art and archaeological sites. The area was a central part of the early homeland of the Ute Indians, and has many localities of traditional cultural and sacred site interest to modern Utes.

Description: Many scattered important archaeological sites that include archaic to historic Ute occupation in the 1880s (including the Harris site, rock art sites, and wickiups).

Values Assessed: Cultural

Relevance Criteria Considered: 1

Importance Criteria Considered: 1 and 2

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	Three different transitional time periods of occupation that aren't represented elsewhere.

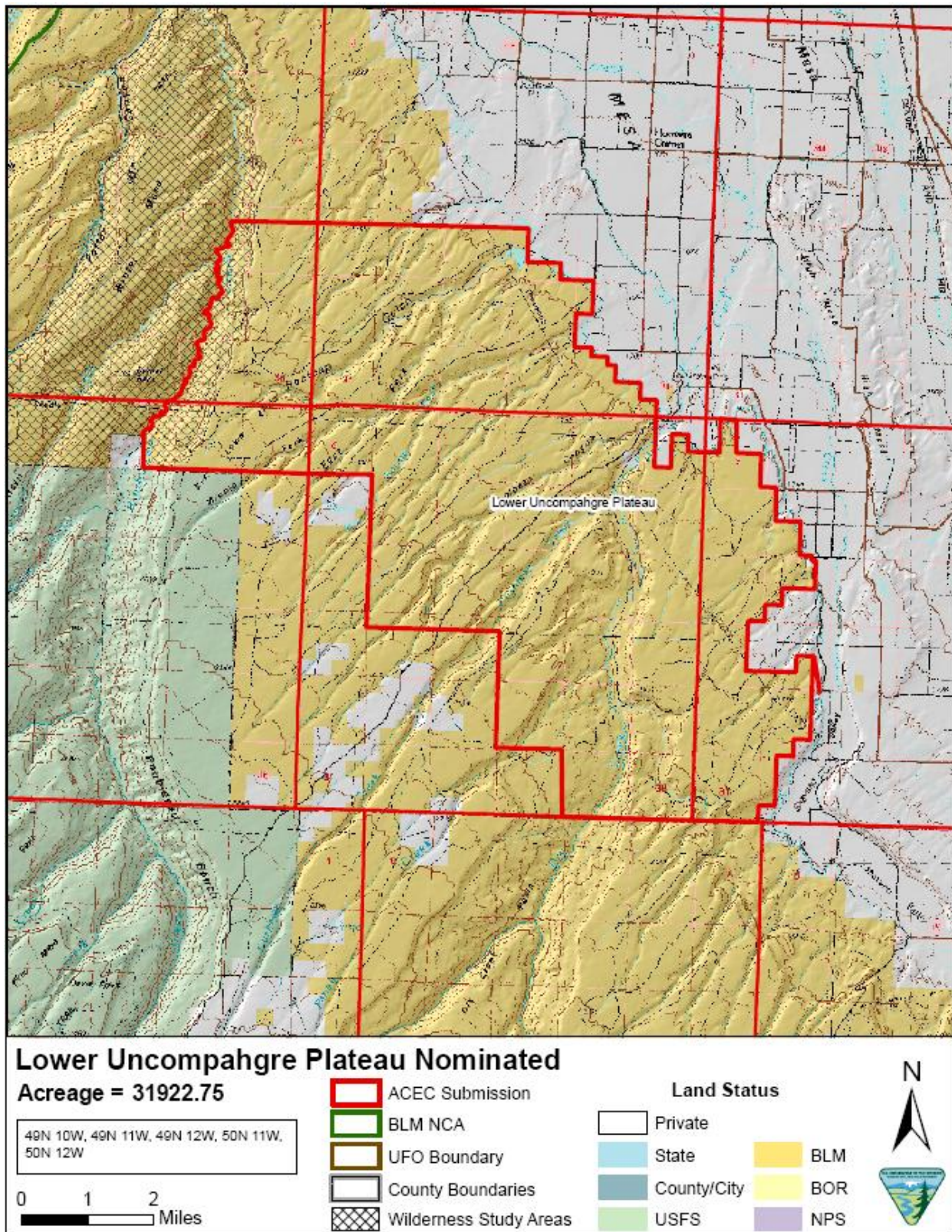
IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The archaeological sites are nationally significant.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The archaeological sites are irreplaceable if damaged.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 9 - Lower Uncompahgre Plateau Cultural Proposed ACEC



10. SAN MIGUEL RIVER ACEC

Status: Existing

General Location: San Miguel River and adjacent lands, from approximately Placerville, CO to Horsefly Creek, including Saltado Creek and Beaver Creek.

Acreage: 22,841

Significance: The ACEC preserves the high quality riparian vegetation resources, habitat for many bird species, and the scenic value of the corridor.

Description: The San Miguel River ACEC was designated through amendment of the San Miguel RMP in 1993. It protects high quality native riparian communities that are mainly due to the undammed San Miguel River and its intact hydrology. Such communities are becoming increasingly rare in Colorado.

The ACEC has been designated as an Important Bird Area by Audubon Society. This site represents the finest protected Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat (SWCR) in the United States (with the exception of Arizona's San Pedro SWCR), and it provides breeding sites for a wide variety of species and primary migratory routes for nearly all of the West's songbirds. More than 300 bird species have been observed at the site. The expanding black phoebe population, which has been moving up the San Miguel River, reached the lower end of the original ACEC in 1999. The river also has yellow-billed cuckoo habitat.

Values Assessed: Botanical: *Riparian Vegetation*
Scenic

Relevance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The ACEC has scenic values; the Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway runs along the river. VRI Class 2.
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area is designated as an Important Bird Area by Audubon. It also has yellow-billed cuckoo (federal candidate and BLM sensitive species) habitat and a black phoebe (rare) population.

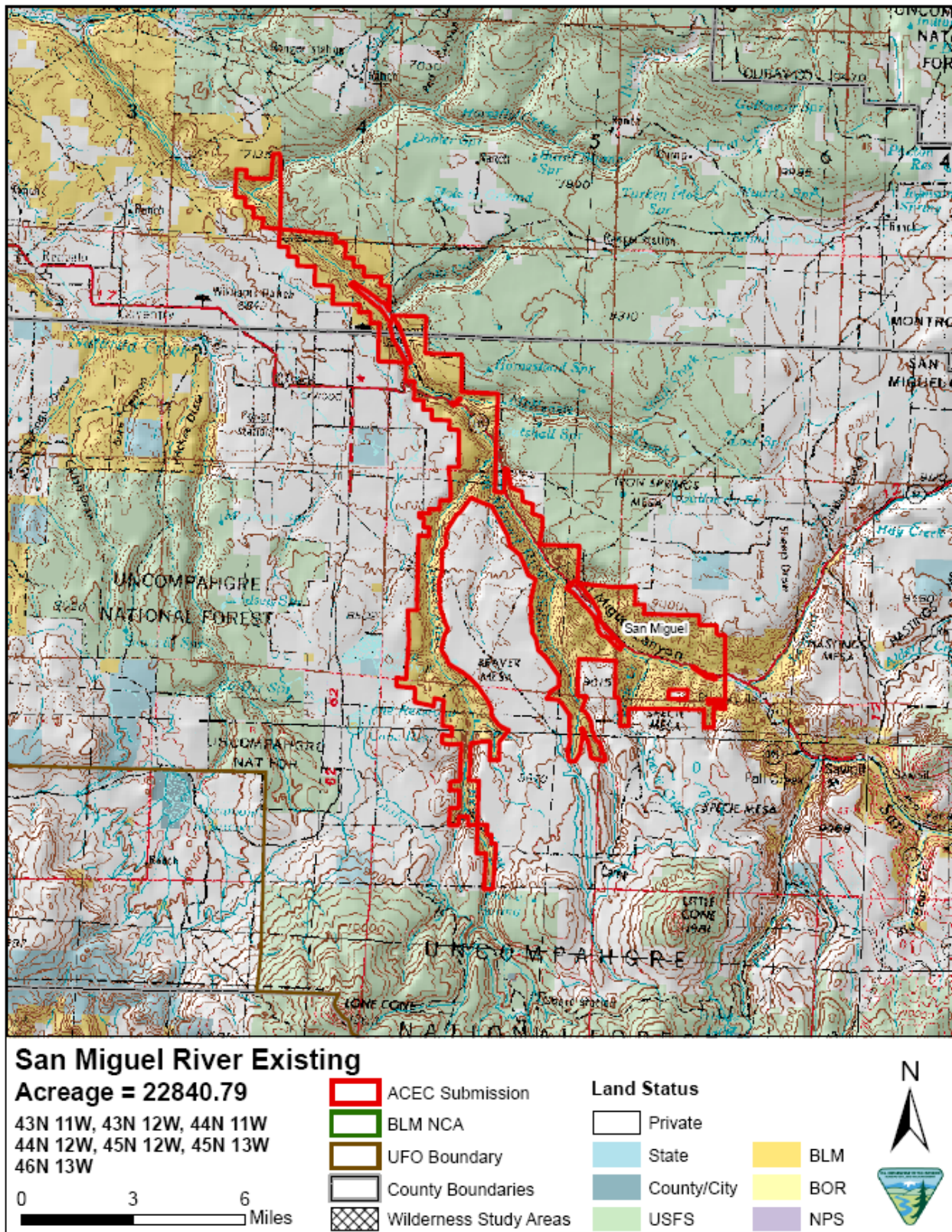
ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	There are exemplary and highly diverse riparian communities supported by the naturally functioning San Miguel River.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	High biodiversity significance at a global level for the riparian vegetation communities, and a designated Important Bird Area of national importance.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Exemplary and extensive riparian communities, now rare in Colorado (since dams control most rivers). Vulnerable to invasive weeds, which are threats to native ecosystems.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Already an ACEC. High priority riparian area. One of two free flowing rivers in Colorado (undammed). TNC designation as endangered landscape

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 10 - San Miguel River ACEC (Existing)



II. SAN MIGUEL RIVER PROPOSED ACEC EXPANSION

Status: Existing, with proposed addition

Proponent: BLM, Trout Unlimited

General Location: San Miguel River and adjacent lands, from approximately Deep Creek to the powerline about one-half mile upstream of Montrose County Rd 90, including Saltado Creek, Beaver Creek, and a portion of Leopard Creek.

Acreage: 35,181

Significance: The ACEC preserves the high quality riparian vegetation resources, habitat for many bird species, and the scenic value of the corridor.

Description: The San Miguel River ACEC is an existing ACEC. It was designated through amendment of the San Miguel RMP in 1993. It protects high quality native riparian communities that are mainly due to the undammed San Miguel River and its intact hydrology. Such communities are becoming increasingly rare in Colorado.

The proposed expansion would extend protection to additional areas that have been recognized by the BLM and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) as having high biodiversity significance. The CNHP has proposed the San Miguel River at Cottonwood Creek as a Potential Conservation Area which hosts skunkbrush/coyote willow riparian shrubland, narrowleaf cottonwood/skunkbrush riparian woodland, and coyote willow/mesic graminoid riparian shrubland, all of which are good to excellent examples of these community types.

The original ACEC has been designated as an Important Bird Area by Audubon Society. This site represents the finest protected Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat (SWCR) in the United States, with the exception of Arizona's San Pedro SWCR. It provides breeding sites for a wide variety of species and primary migratory routes for nearly all of the West's songbirds. More than 300 bird species have been observed at the site. The expanding black phoebe population, which has been moving up the San Miguel River, reached the lower end of the original ACEC in 1999.

Values Assessed: Botanical: *Riparian Vegetation*
Scenic

Relevance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

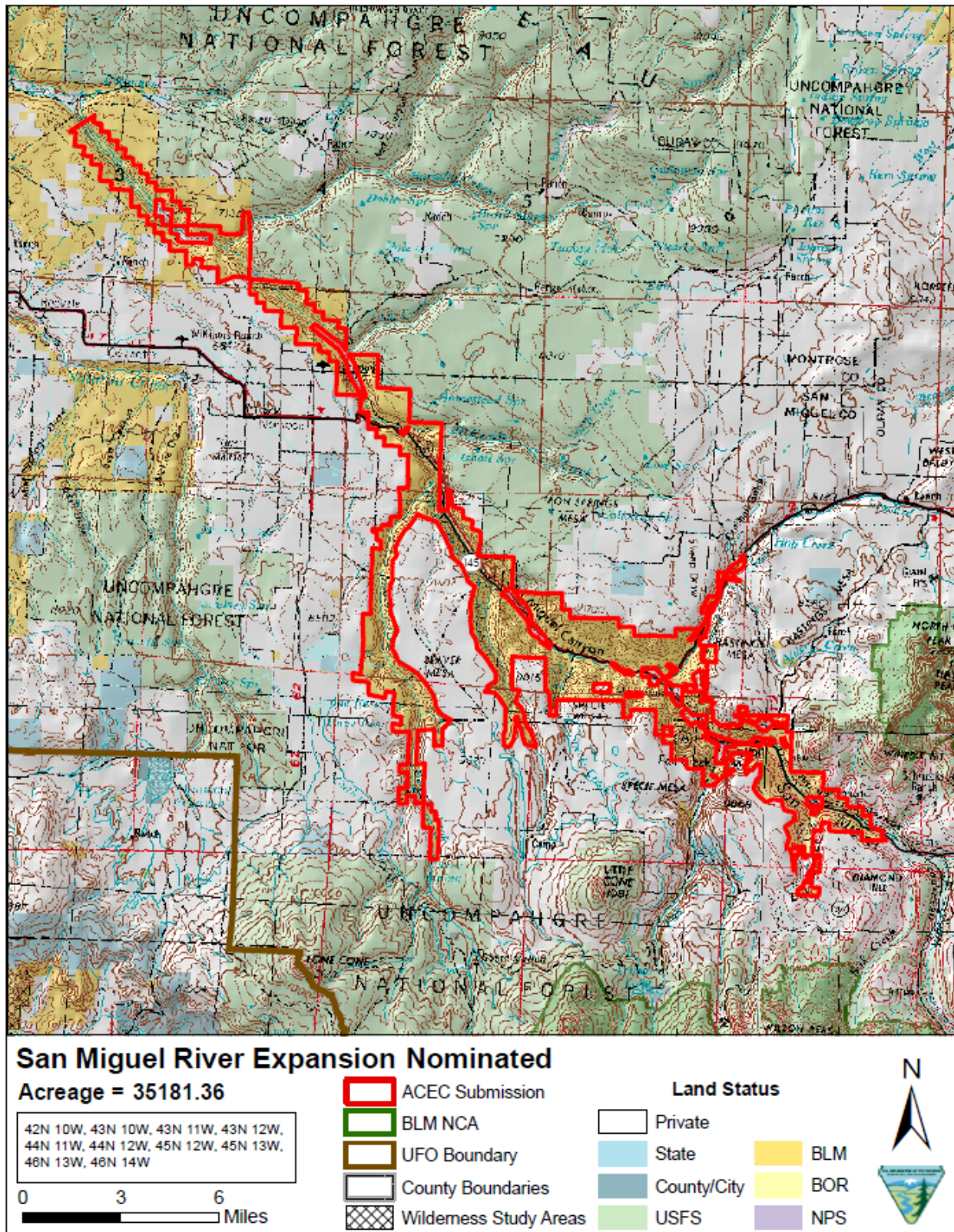
ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	The ACEC has scenic values. The Unaweeep Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway follows the river downstream from Placerville. The San Juan Skyway follows the river upstream from Placerville. VRI Class 2 rating.
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area is designated as an Important Bird Area by Audubon. It also has a Canada lynx (threatened species) movement corridor, Colorado River cut-throat trout (BLM sensitive species), yellow billed cuckoo (Candidate and BLM sensitive species) habitat, and a black phoebe (rare) population.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	There are exemplary and highly diverse riparian communities supported by the naturally functioning San Miguel River. An important wetland area is also in the proposed ACEC.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	High biodiversity significance at a global level, and a designated Important Bird Area of national importance. Part of national and state scenic and historic byway system.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Exemplary and extensive riparian communities, now rare in Colorado with dams controlling most rivers. Vulnerable to invasive species, which are threats to native ecosystems. High water quality in the area.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The existing ACEC needs some expansion to extend protection to additional significant riparian communities.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 11 - San Miguel River Proposed ACEC Expansion



12. SOUTH GUNNISON SAGE GROUSE PROPOSED ACEC

Status: *Proposed*

Proponent: San Miguel County, WSERC, WCC

General Location: Scattered parcels of BLM lands beginning about seven miles southeast of, and about nine miles southwest of, Norwood, CO.

Acreage: 464

Significance: The proposed ACEC contains potential, occupied and historic Gunnison sage grouse (GUSG) habitat in San Miguel County. GUSG currently occur in what have previously been considered 8 widely scattered and isolated populations in Colorado and Utah. In Colorado, 7 GUSG population areas are: Cerro Summit-Cimarron-Sims Mesa, Crawford, Dove Creek, Gunnison Basin, Piñon Mesa, Poncha Pass, and San Miguel Basin. The San Miguel Basin population exhibits a patchy distribution of GUSG. As a result, there are 6 separate “subpopulations” identified within San Miguel Basin: Dry Creek Basin; Hamilton Mesa; Miramonte Reservoir; Gurley Reservoir; Beaver Mesa; and Iron Springs.¹ This proposed ACEC area is the northern end of what is considered part of the San Miguel (Miramonte Reservoir) population of GUSG. The core of this population is found on the Dolores Field Office to the south, but small portions of occupied habitat exist in this proposed ACEC. Historically, Dove Creek - Monticello, San Miguel, Crawford, and Piñon Mesa all had much more sagebrush habitat and probably larger GUSG populations that were somewhat connected through more contiguous areas of sagebrush habitat. An estimated 20% loss of sagebrush habitat between the late 1950's and the early 1990's and fragmentation of sagebrush habitat in southwestern Colorado is thought to have lead to the current isolation of these populations.² The protection of the small BLM portions of occupied habitat adjacent to private, state and Forest Service lands being managed for GUSG, provide additional protection for the species.

Description: The proposed ACEC is located on several small parcels of BLM land containing potential, historic, and occupied GUSG habitat, as defined by Colorado Division of Wildlife. It should be noted that determining the historic range of GUSG is problematic for many reasons, most notably because of widespread loss of sagebrush habitats, which

¹ Pg 36-37 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

² Pg 51 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

preceded scientific study of the species. Additionally, GUSG have been extirpated from many areas for which no useful zoological records or specimens exist ⁽³⁾.

Values Assessed: Wildlife Resource: *Habitat for BLM Sensitive Species*

Relevance Criteria Considered: 2

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

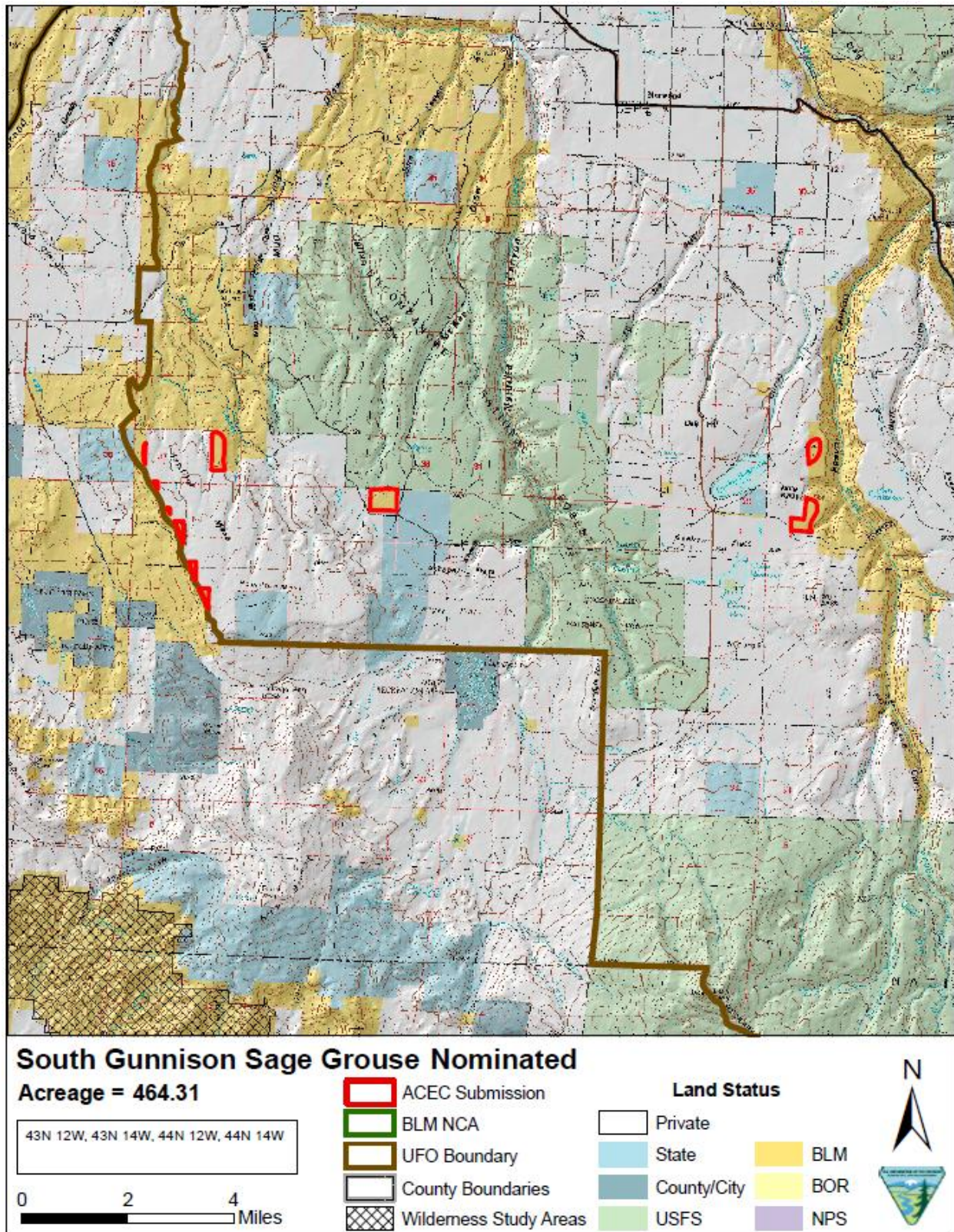
RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	Much of the historic and occupied habitat and leks are on private and state lands in the area. Concentrated nesting and brood rearing habitat exist on BLM lands in limited small areas near Miramonte Reservoir.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	No	The populations of Gunnison sage grouse are a very small piece of the San Miguel population.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Locations of this potential ACEC, adjacent to occupied habitats on state, forest and private lands where active management is occurring, could be sensitive to change and change could have impacts to populations.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The Gunnison sage grouse is being considered for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act. There is also a great deal of interest locally and statewide in protecting the species.

³ Pg 32 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 12 - South Gunnison Sage Grouse Proposed ACEC



13. WEST GUNNISON SAGE GROUSE PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Proposed

Proponent: San Miguel County, WSERC, WCC

General Location: Western Montrose County, in Paradox Valley, and in areas from northwest of Nucla to south of Naturita, CO.

Acreage: 23,021

Significance: The proposed ACEC contains historic and potential Gunnison sage grouse (GUSG) habitat in western Montrose Counties.

Description: The proposed ACEC is located on several small parcels of BLM land containing historic GUSG habitat, as defined by Colorado Division of Wildlife. It should be noted that determining the historic range of GUSG is problematic for many reasons, most notably because of widespread loss of sagebrush habitats, which preceded scientific study of the species. Additionally, GUSG have been extirpated from many areas for which no useful zoological records or specimens exist ⁽⁴⁾.

GUSG currently occur in what have previously been considered 8 widely scattered and isolated populations in Colorado and Utah. In Colorado, 7 GUSG population areas are: Cerro Summit-Cimarron-Sims Mesa, Crawford, Dove Creek, Gunnison Basin, Piñon Mesa, Poncha Pass, and San Miguel Basin. The San Miguel Basin population exhibits a patchy distribution of GUSG. As a result, there are 6 separate “subpopulations” identified within San Miguel Basin: Dry Creek Basin; Hamilton Mesa; Miramonte Reservoir; Gurley Reservoir; Beaver Mesa; and Iron Springs.⁵ This proposed ACEC area is the northern end of what is considered part of the San Miguel population of GUSG. The core of this population is found on the Dolores Field Office to the south. Historically, Dove Creek - Monticello, San Miguel, Crawford, and Piñon Mesa all had much more sagebrush habitat and probably larger GUSG populations that were somewhat connected through more contiguous areas of sagebrush habitat. An estimated 20% loss of sagebrush habitat between the late 1950's and the early 1990's and fragmentation of sagebrush habitat in southwestern Colorado is thought to have lead to the current isolation of these populations.⁶

⁴ Pg 32 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

⁵ Pg 36-37 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

⁶ Pg 51 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

Values Assessed: Wildlife Resource: *Habitat for BLM Sensitive Species*

Relevance Criteria Considered: 2

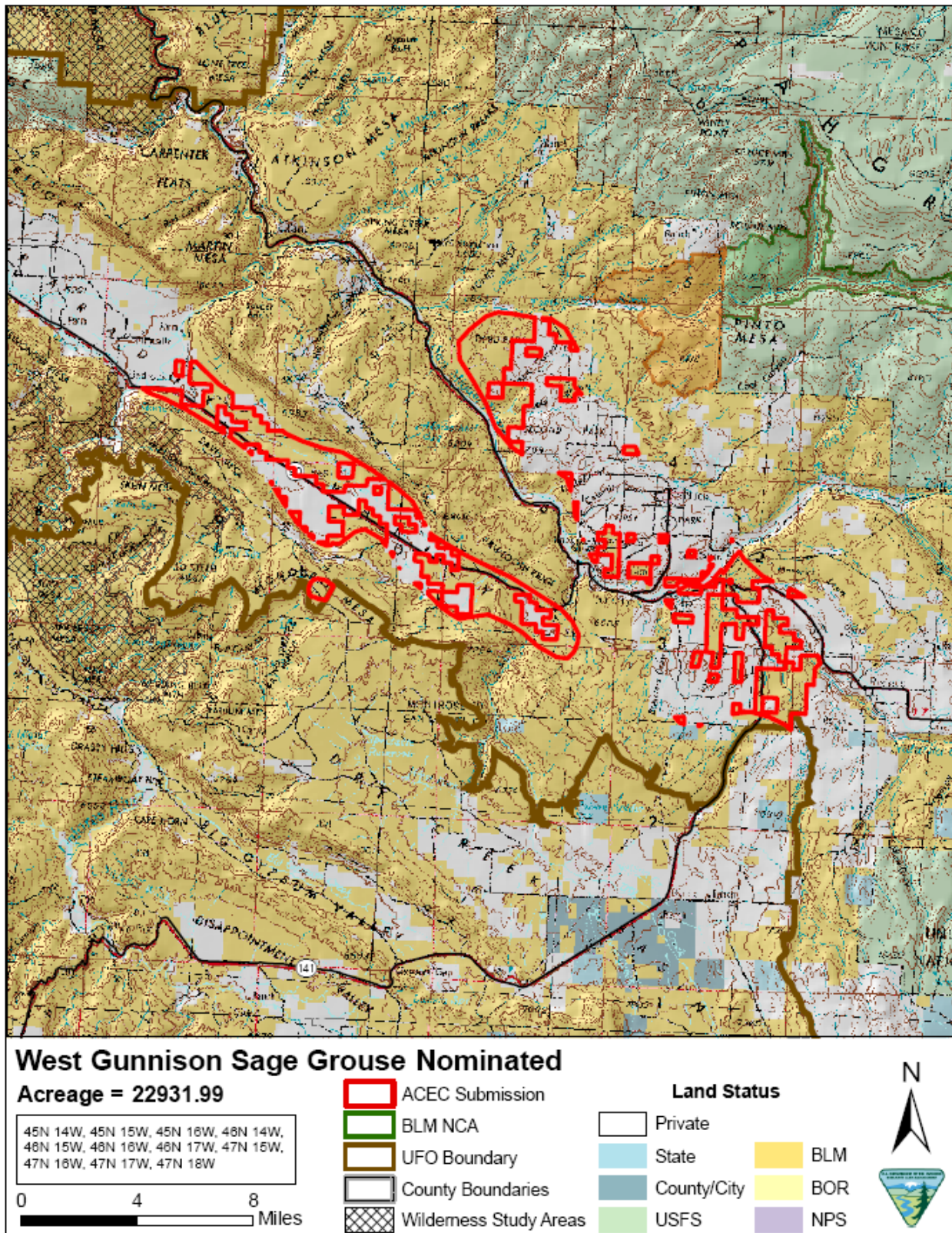
Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	No	Locations in the proposed ACEC contain areas of potential habitat which have not been occupied for greater than 50 years. These particular locations do not meet the relevance criteria.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	No	The habitat is not occupied, and has not been for over 50 years. The area is in the extreme northern portion of habitat for the San Miguel population.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	No	Locations west of Redvale contain areas of potential habitat which has not been occupied for greater than 50 years. Potential habitat in these locations does not meet the importance criteria.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The Gunnison sage grouse is being considered for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act. There is also a great deal of interest locally and statewide in protecting the species.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 13 - West Gunnison Sage Grouse Proposed ACEC



14. SIMS CERRO GUNNISON SAGE GROUSE PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Proposed

Proponent: Art Goodtimes

General Location: Approximately five to thirteen miles south of Montrose, CO, east of Spring Creek, and on BLM lands on both sides of Happy Canyon, Dolores Canyon, and Horsefly Canyon; approximately ten to fourteen miles east of Montrose, on both sides of highway 50 near Cerro Summit.

Acreage: 25,621

Significance: The proposed ACEC contains occupied and historic Gunnison Sage grouse (GUSG) habitat in Montrose County. GUSG currently occur in what have previously been considered eight widely scattered and isolated populations in Colorado and Utah. In Colorado, the seven identified GUSG population areas are: Cerro Summit-Cimarron-Sims Mesa, Crawford, Dove Creek, Gunnison Basin, Piñon Mesa, Poncha Pass, and San Miguel Basin. The Cerro Summit-Cimarron-Sims Mesa population exhibits a patchy distribution of GUSG. As a result, there are two subpopulations identified within Cerro Summit-Cimarron-Sims Mesa: Cerro Summit-Cimarron; and Sims Mesa.⁷ This proposed ACEC area includes the BLM lands within the Sims Mesa subpopulation, and a very small portion of the Cerro Summit-Cimarron subpopulation that is within the planning area. An estimated 20% loss of sagebrush habitat between the late 1950's and the early 1990's and fragmentation of sagebrush habitat in southwestern Colorado is thought to have lead to the current isolation of these populations.⁸ The protection of the small BLM portions of occupied/historic habitat provides additional protection for the species.

Description: The proposed ACEC is located on a large parcel of BLM land southeast of Montrose, and on smaller pieces of BLM lands about 10 miles east of Montrose near Cerro Summit. The ACEC contains historic, potential, and occupied GUSG habitat, as defined by Colorado Division of Wildlife.

The Sims Mesa location has been occupied by a few grouse as recently as 2002. Other lek sites in the area include Coal Hill (6 birds seen in 2004), Hairpin (1 bird seen in 2010), Cimarron (5 birds seen 2009), Cerro (last seen 2000) (Banulis, CDOW pers. comm. 5/27/2010). While no GUSG have been seen on the Cerro lek in recent years, a GUSG was seen in the Cerro Summit area in 2009 (personal communication with Ken Holsinger).

⁷ Pg 36-37 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

⁸ Pg 51 in Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee. 2005. Gunnison sage-grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

Values Assessed: Wildlife Resource: *Habitat for BLM Sensitive Species*

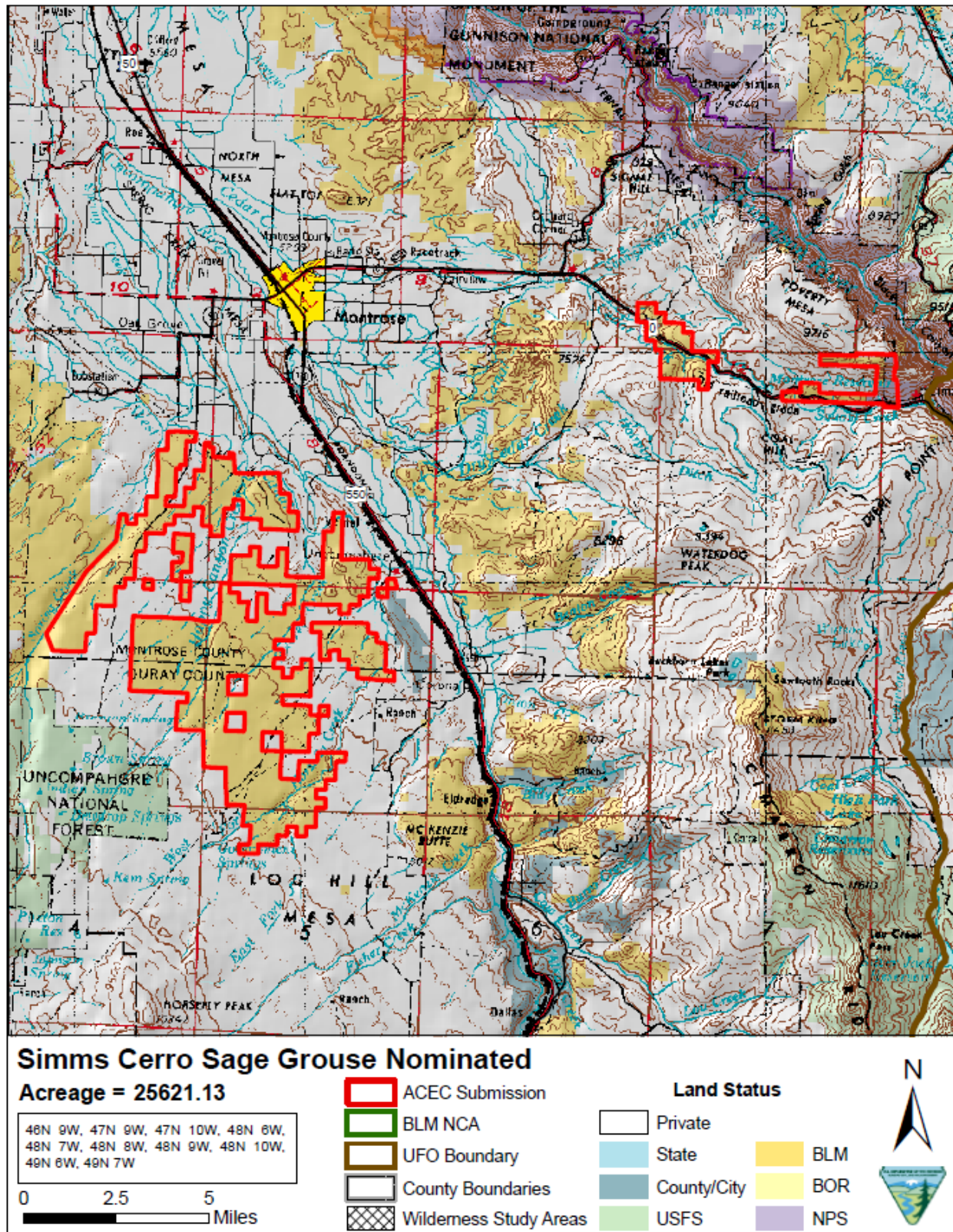
Relevance Criteria Considered: 2

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	These locations have historic, potential and occupied habitat for the Gunnison sage grouse as defined by CDOW.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	No	The habitat has had only occasional grouse lekking activity in recent years (See the description above).
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Gunnison sage grouse habitat has been fragmented by human uses. This GUSG population's habitat has become relatively small and isolated from other GUSG populations, and this population is vulnerable to extirpation.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	The Gunnison sage grouse is being considered for federal listing as an endangered species. There is also a great deal of interest locally and statewide in protecting the species.

ACEC Map 14 - Simms Cerro Sage Grouse Proposed ACEC



15. DOLORES RIVER SLICKROCK CANYON PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Proposed

Proponent: BLM (includes the CNHP La Sal PCA)

General Location: Coyote Wash to approximately Bedrock, CO, within the Dolores River canyon, including La Sal Creek and La Sal Creek canyon.

Acreage: 10,666

Significance: A spectacular deep canyon with steep cliffs supports high quality riparian vegetation and relic riparian communities, hanging gardens, BLM sensitive plants and fish, desert bighorn sheep, and peregrine falcon. The area also has high scenic quality. An ACEC would help protect these resources.

Description: The Dolores River, La Sal Creek and Coyote Wash have carved a spectacular, deep canyon through Jurassic and Triassic sandstones. Steep vertical cliffs dominate the canyonsides, broken only where tributaries enter the canyon.

Major geologic formations in the canyon are Wingate, Kayenta, Navajo and Entrada sandstones. The Morrison Formation appears near the southern end. Most of this area is roadless and accessible only by raft, canoe or kayak.

This site includes the riparian zone and adjacent uplands along the Dolores River, from Slick Rock Canyon north to Bedrock. There are excellent to good occurrences of the globally common coyote willow/mesic graminoids (*Salix exigua* / mesic graminoids). Typical vegetation along the river and creeks includes a band of coyote willow, mixed with giant reed at the water's edge between the low and high water marks. Cottonwoods and red-osier dogwood are on site. La Sal creek has a critically imperiled plant association consisting of box elder and river birch. Colorado's largest population of Kachina daisy (*Erigeron kachinensis*), a G2/S1 BLM Sensitive Species, occur along drainages feeding into Coyote wash and canyon.

The canyon bottoms support a nearly continuous occurrence of the riparian plant association known as New Mexico privet foothills riparian shrubland. The site supports two excellent (A-ranked) occurrences of a globally imperiled (G2/S1) New Mexico privet riparian shrub community (*Forestiera pubescens*) along the Dolores River. The New Mexico privet plant community, often accompanied by skunkbrush, big sagebrush, giant reed and wild rose, is known only from the major rivers in the Four Corners area.

There are a few hanging garden communities (*Aquilegia micrantha* - *Mimulus eastwoodiae*), imperiled to vulnerable on a global scale (G2G3/S2S3), containing small populations of the globally vulnerable (G3/S1) Eastwood monkeyflower (*Mimulus eastwoodiae*). In an alcove seep at river mile 77.5, the monkeyflower was represented by only six plants.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

The proposed ACEC also has a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the Naturita milkvetch (*Astragalus naturitensis*), a BLM sensitive species and considered to be imperiled to vulnerable both globally and in Colorado (G2G3/S2S3).

Uplands in this area have pinyon – juniper woodlands, sagebrush, or barren sandstone cliffs. Naturita milkvetch was found in the pinyon – juniper community at a campsite at mile 72. Benches sometimes have patches of native grasslands. Relic patches of high quality grasslands were identified by BLM in 1980. Formerly known as *Stipa comata* - West, this community is now called *Hesperostipa comata*, or needle and thread Great Basin herbaceous vegetation. The species composition of the communities varies. It usually includes, in addition to needle-and-thread grass, galleta, Indian ricegrass, and blue grama. In the occurrences in this site, needle-and-thread was the dominant grass, ranging from 6% to 20% cover and blue grama accounted for 1% to 11% cover.

Additionally, the Dolores River throughout the length of the site supports populations of roundtail chub (*Gila robusta*), which is a BLM sensitive species and globally vulnerable (G3/S2). Populations of the chub are at the upstream margin of the species' range and comprise the majority of occurrences for this species. Flannelmouth suckers and bluehead suckers also likely occur in the area. Other animal species with conservation significance are desert bighorn sheep and peregrine falcon.

The proposed ACEC also has rock art panels and paleontological sites.

Values Assessed: Botanical: *Riparian Communities and BLM Sensitive Species*
Fish and Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*
Scenic

Relevance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	BLM has rated the area as VRI Class 2. Cultural sites (rock art panels and historic structures) are in the area, as is a paleontological study area.
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	Desert bighorn sheep, peregrine falcon, and Roundtail chub (BLM sensitive species) inhabit the area. Potential habitat for other BLM sensitive fishes including flannelmouth and bluehead suckers.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Several globally vulnerable and state rare plants are in the proposed ACEC area. The river banks also have box-elder, river birch and red-osier dogwood communities.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The paleontological resource is of state and national significance. Rare and globally vulnerable plants and plant communities are in the area.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Rock art panels are vulnerable to damage. Vulnerable to invasive species, which are a threat to native ecosystems. Several globally vulnerable and state rare plants are in the proposed ACEC area. Nesting peregrine falcons, a recently delisted species, are sensitive to disturbances. Bighorn sheep are experiencing declines across the region and human-related disturbances and other adverse changes may contribute to these trends.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	Within a WSA.

16. LA SAL CREEK PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Proposed

Proponent: CNAP

General Location: In Montrose County, from the south rim of La Sal Creek to Paradox Valley, and from the east rim of the Dolores River canyon to about Spring Creek.

Acreage: 10,492

Significance: A spectacular deep canyon supports high quality riparian vegetation and relic riparian communities, BLM sensitive plants, desert bighorn sheep, and peregrine falcon. The area also has high scenic quality. An ACEC would preserve these resources.

Description: La Sal Creek cuts a spectacular canyon of entrenched meanders through red Triassic and Jurassic sandstones and siltstones. The narrow floodplain supports a critically imperiled plant association consisting of box elder and river birch. In the narrow band of riparian vegetation, box elder accounts for as much as 70% cover, with river birch providing 25 to 60% cover. Only a few other small occurrences of this community are known.

New Mexico privet, coyote willow, red-osier dogwood, giant reed, and wild rose are also common. Although there are some introduced pasture grasses, including Kentucky bluegrass, there is no tamarisk along the upper part of the creek.

Eroding shale slopes support populations of rare plants: Paradox breadroot (*Pediomelum aromaticum*), a G3/S2 BLM Sensitive Species; and Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*), a G2/S2, BLM Sensitive Species.

Upland vegetation consists of pinyon - juniper woodland with both true and dwarf mountain mahogany, cliffrose, Gambel's oak, yucca, cacti, and rabbitbrush. A good sized population of the Paradox breadroot, with several hundred plants, was found on a dry bench overlooking La Sal Creek.

Values Assessed: Botanical: *Unique Vegetation Communities and BLM Sensitive Species*
Fish and Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*

Relevance Criteria Considered: 2 and 3

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

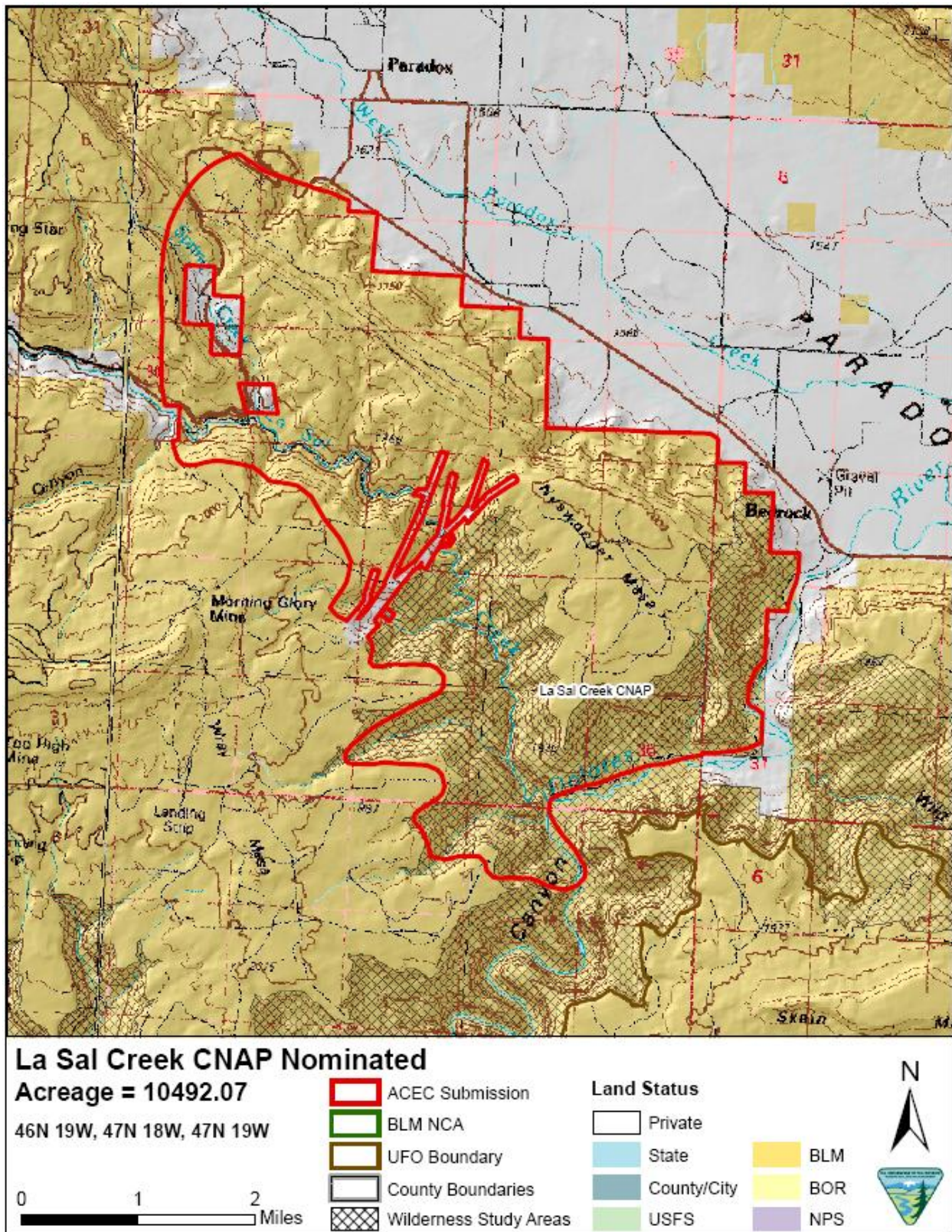
ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	Desert bighorn sheep and peregrine falcon (BLM sensitive species) inhabit the area.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Several globally vulnerable and state rare plants are in the proposed ACEC area. The river banks also have box-elder, river birch and red-osier dogwood communities.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Rare and globally vulnerable plants and plant communities are in the area.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Vulnerable to invasive species, which are a threat to native ecosystems. The globally vulnerable plant communities are difficult to restore.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	A portion of the ACEC is within a WSA.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 16 - La Sal Creek Proposed ACEC



17. COYOTE WASH PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Withdrawn from Consideration

Proponent: CNAP

General Location: In Montrose County, CO; Coyote Wash to the rim of Wray Mesa.

Acreage: 2,102

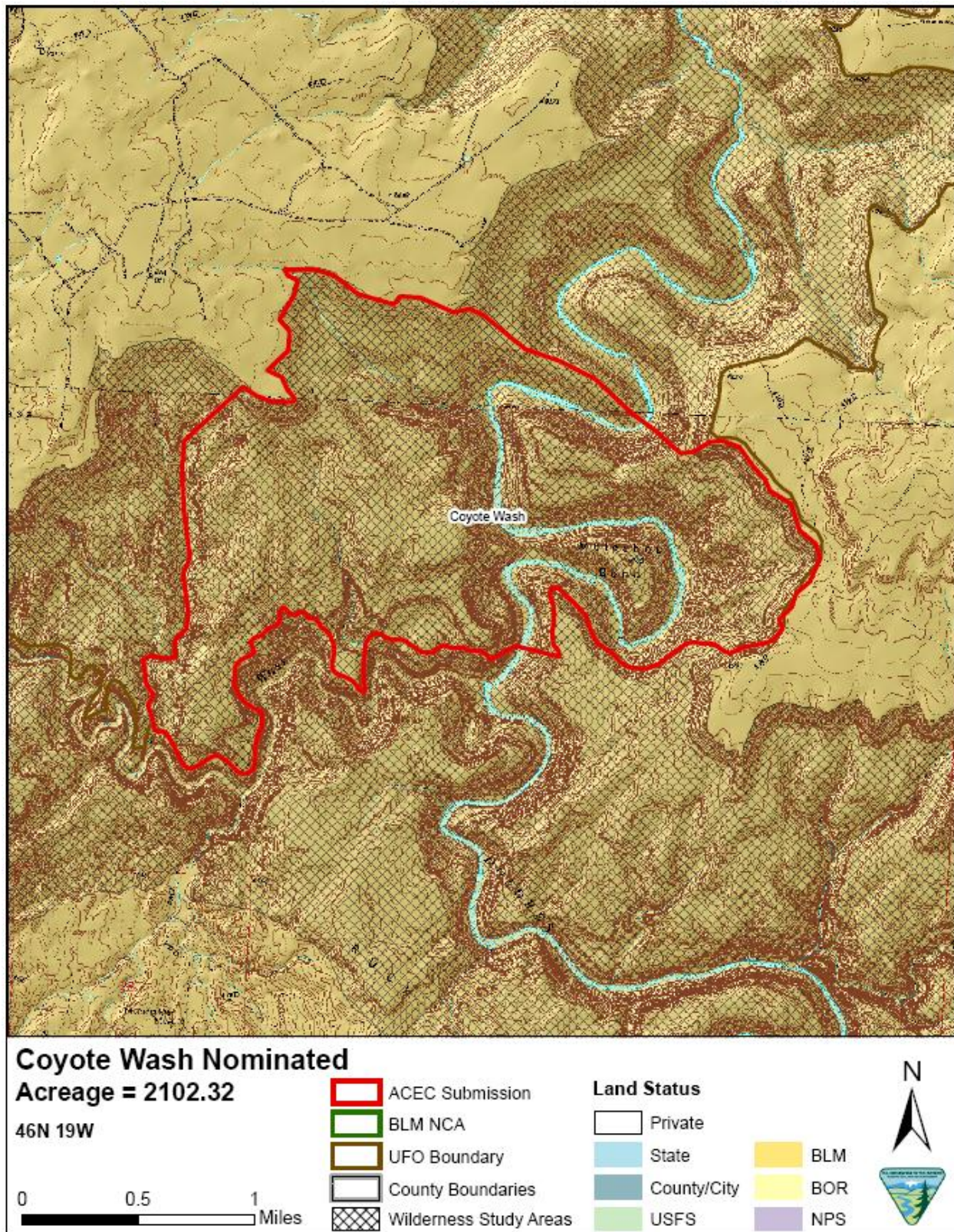
Significance: Coyote Wash contains the best known occurrence of the globally imperiled Kachina daisy.

Description: Coyote Wash is a steep-sided tributary canyon that joins the Dolores Canyon. Its flat sandy bottom has a small meandering stream that occasionally floods. Colorado's largest population of Kachina daisy (*Erigeron kachinensis*), a G2/S1 BLM Sensitive Species, occur along drainages feeding into the wash and canyon; hanging gardens in the canyon walls support Eastwood monkeyflower (*Mimulus eastwoodiae*) a BLM sensitive species. Isolated benches in the canyon support Great Basin grassland communities in excellent condition.

The proposed Coyote Wash ACEC is within the proposed Dolores River Slickrock Canyon ACEC.

Because the area is already considered in another ACEC proposal, the Coyote Wash nomination will not be considered further.

ACEC Map 17 - Coyote Wash Proposed ACEC



18. EAST PARADOX PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Proposed

Proponent: BLM

General Location: Montrose County, CO, from the west rim of the Dolores River canyon to about six miles east of Dolores River, and from highway 90 to the north rim of Paradox Valley.

Acreage: 8,257

Significance: The ACEC would preserve the world's best known occurrence of Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*), the higher than normal density and species diversity of Biological Soil Crusts (BSC), and two species of BSC that are somewhat rare and typically found only on gypsiferous soils.

Description: The East Paradox Creek site is located west of Naturita, Colorado north of Highway 90 as it travels through Paradox Valley. Geologic formations are Hermosa, Moenkopi, Cutler, Kayenta, Chinle, and Quaternary alluviums. The site is underlain by four different soil compositions including the Mikim composition (ustic torriorthents, fine-loamy, mesic, mixed calcareous soils); Palmer composition (ustollic haplargids, coarse-loamy, mixed, mesic soils); and the Zyme composition (ustic torriorthents, clayey, montmorillontic calcareous, mesic shallow soils).

The proposed East Paradox ACEC has the world's best known occurrence of Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*), which is a BLM sensitive species, known only from Colorado, and is globally imperiled (G2/S2). There are two excellent (A-ranked) occurrences of the Paradox breadroot (*Pediomelum aromaticum*), a BLM sensitive species and a plant that is considered to be globally vulnerable and rare in Colorado (G3/S2).

Dark red soils that are apparently derived from the Chinle Formation provide the habitat of the Paradox Valley lupine. These soils are notably different from those at the other major location of the lupine near Naturita.

The area contains a good (B-ranked) occurrence of needle-and-thread Great Basin herbaceous vegetation. In addition, Cold desert shrublands with fourwing saltbush and galleta were found to be in good condition on lower slopes, while mesic western slope piñon – juniper woodlands with Utah serviceberry were in fair condition. Both of these plant communities are of unknown status in Colorado, and need more research. A fair occurrence of another grassland plant association with blue grama and galleta was interspersed with the shrub community.

Growing with the lupine, and often farther downstream in the washes are very large populations of the Paradox breadroot (*Pediomelum aromaticum*), a BLM sensitive species. Native species that are associated with these rare plants include wallflower, yellow cat's-

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

eye, rock cress, three-awn, twin bladderpod, snakeweed, Easter daisy, and prickly-pear cactus. Although some areas have been degraded and have significant amounts of cheatgrass, the drainages with the lupine and breadroot are free of exotic species.

There are well developed cryptogamic crusts between plants. During the spring of 2009, an inventory of BSC was conducted by Jessie Salix (BLM Vernal Field Office Botanist) in the Paradox Valley, at the request of the UFO. The target area for this inventory was immediately southeast of the Dolores River, approximately in Sections 22, 23, 26, and 27, T47N, R18W, N.M.P.M. The soils in this vicinity are derived from the Paradox Formation, and are highly gypsiferous. These soils tend to support a higher than normal density and species diversity of Biological Soil Crusts (BSC).

The inventory resulted in the documentation of the occurrence of two species of BSC that are somewhat rare and typically found only on gypsiferous soils. The two species are: *Lecanora gypsicola* and *Gypsoplaca macrophylla*. The identification of these species was verified by Dr. Larry St. Clair, Lichenologist at Brigham Young University. Dr. St. Clair conveyed via e-mail to Jessie Salix that he felt the lichens were in need of protection for two reasons: 1) they occur exclusively on gypsiferous soils, a limited habitat that is commonly mined, 2) Dr. St. Clair has only observed these two species on less than half of the gypsiferous sites he has inventoried. The location is also the type locality for the Paradox cateye (*C. paradoxa*).

This area has a number of occurrences of wildlife species with conservation significance the rarest of which are the roundtail chub and flannelmouth sucker, both BLM sensitive fish species. Nesting Peregrine Falcons also occur at this site.

Values Assessed: Botanical: *Unique Vegetation Communities and BLM Sensitive Species*
Fish and Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*

Relevance Criteria Considered: 2 and 3

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

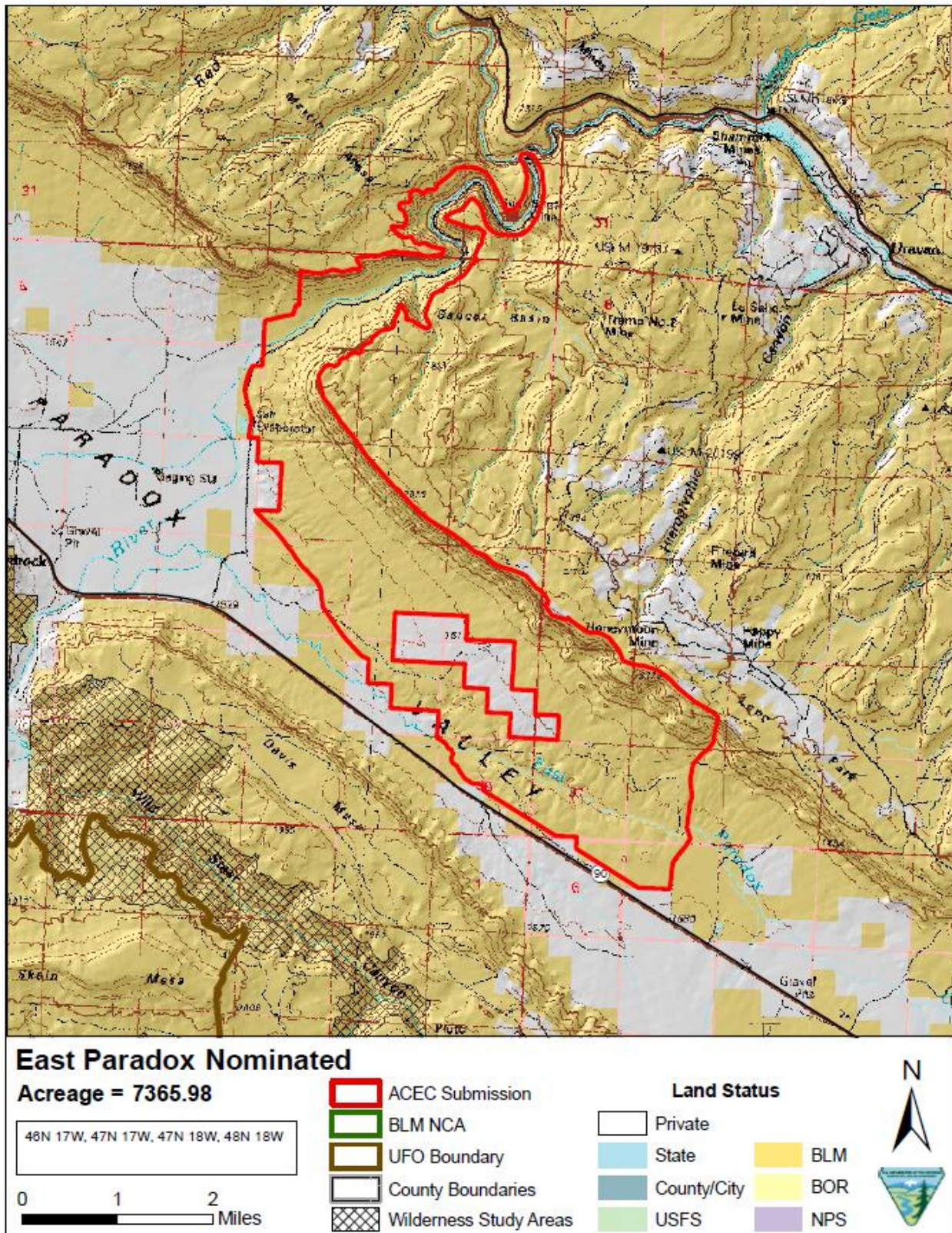
ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	BLM sensitive fish species – roundtail chub and flannelmouth sucker. Peregrine falcon.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	BLM sensitive species - Paradox Valley lupine and paradox breadroot. Two significant and rare soil crusts in a gypsiferous soil ecosystem (uncommon for the area). <i>Cryptantha paradoxa</i> endemic to gypsiferous soils and somewhat rare only found in eastern Utah, western Colorado and one site in northwest New Mexico.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The two species of biological soil crusts are limited to this type locality. BLM sensitive plant species have national significance.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The biological soil crusts are fragile, easily damaged and heal slowly. Has the best known occurrence of the sensitive and rare Paradox Valley lupine which grows only in Colorado. <i>Cryptantha paradoxa</i> type locality is both scientifically unique and irreplaceable.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	CNHP has recommended the area as a PCA.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 18 - East Paradox Proposed ACEC



19. WEST PARADOX PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Proposed

Proponent: BLM

General Location: Montrose County, CO, from the west rim of the Dolores River canyon to the west end of Paradox Valley, and up to Montrose County Rd Q13.

Acreage: 5,198

Significance: The ACEC would preserve habitat for the Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*). The area also contains peregrine falcon eyries.

Description: The West Paradox Valley site is located on the north side of Paradox Valley and west of the Dolores River, on dark red soils derived from the Chinle Formation. This site contains an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence and historical occurrences of Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*), which is a BLM sensitive and globally imperiled (G2/S2) species. It also contains Paradox breadroot (*Pediomelum aromaticum*), which is also BLM sensitive, and a globally vulnerable (G3/S2) plant.

The Paradox Valley lupine and Paradox breadroot are both locally common in the bottoms and on the sides of draws at the base of the south-facing slopes. There are many thousands of individuals of each species, with a variety of ages represented.

Other vegetation consists of Utah juniper woodland, with galleta and snakeweed. The plant community is in good condition with few exotic species present. The Abajo penstemon occurs on the slopes with pinyon, juniper, cliffrose, Mormon tea, and serviceberry. Other associated species are mountain big sagebrush, yellow cats-eye, rough-seed cat's-eye, blue grama, Spanish bayonet, Wingate milkvetch, three-awn, Townsend's Easter daisy, prickly pear cactus, and hedgehog cactus.

The area experiences light vehicle use. The land is primarily administered by the BLM, with some private land on the south side.

The boundary is drawn to include the lower edge of the pinyon-juniper community which support the Paradox Valley lupine and Paradox breadroot, and includes the cliff faces to the canyon rim, which are the site of peregrine falcon eyries. It encompasses the known occupied sites of Paradox Valley lupine and Paradox breadroot, while allowing adequate additional habitat for these species to move or expand over time.

Values Assessed: Botanical: *Unique Vegetation Communities and BLM Sensitive Species*
Fish and Wildlife: *BLM Sensitive Species*

Relevance Criteria Considered: 2 and 3

Importance Criteria Considered: 1, 2, and 3

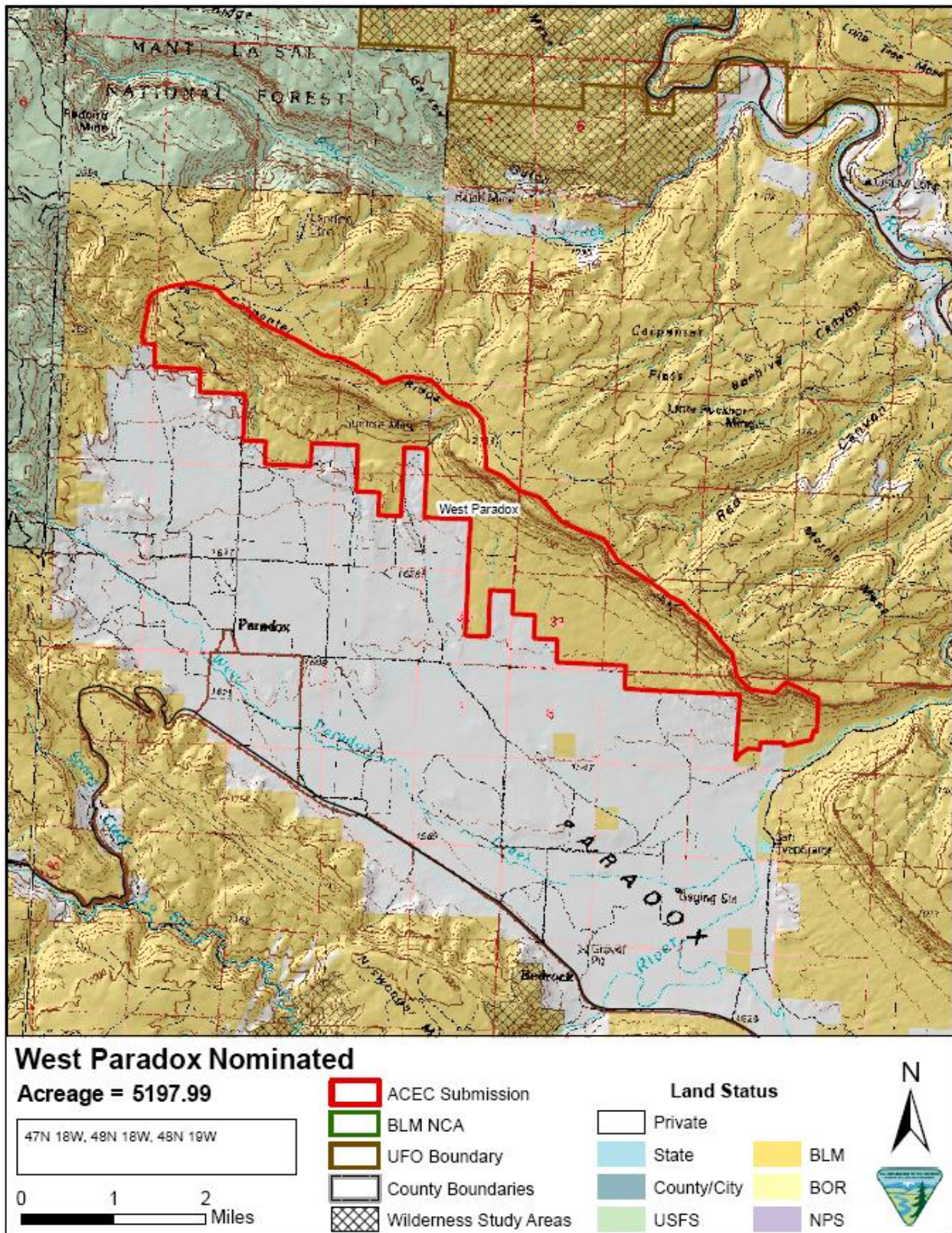
ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
2	A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	The area has peregrine falcon (BLM sensitive species), a sensitive bird species.
3	A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).	Yes	Paradox lupine and paradox breadroot (BLM sensitive species) are within the area.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Paradox lupine and paradox breadroot are BLM sensitive species; they are also globally imperiled and globally vulnerable, respectively.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Has populations of the sensitive and rare Paradox Valley lupine which grows only in Colorado.
3	Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.	Yes	CNHP has recommended the area as a PCA.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 19 - West Paradox Proposed ACEC



20. WEST PARADOX ROCK ART PROPOSED ACEC

Proponent: WSERC, WCC

General Location: Montrose County, on the north slope of Paradox Valley, approximately nine miles west of Nucla, CO.

Acreage: 508

Significance: The proposed ACEC contains important rock art and archaeological sites. The area also contains Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*).

Description: The proposed ACEC is located at the northeast part of Paradox Valley, west of Sawtooth Ridge.

It contains important rock art and archaeological sites, including several outstanding examples of Ancestral Puebloan style petroglyphs, Formative period and earlier occupations, features and isolates, and settled village sites dating more than five hundred to a thousand years old.

The site contains an occurrence and historical occurrences of Paradox Valley lupine (*Lupinus crassus*), which is a BLM sensitive and globally imperiled (G2/S2) species. There could be possible conflicts between peregrine falcons and hang gliders on the cliffs above Paradox.

Values Assessed: Cultural

Relevance Criteria Considered: I

Importance Criteria Considered: I and 2

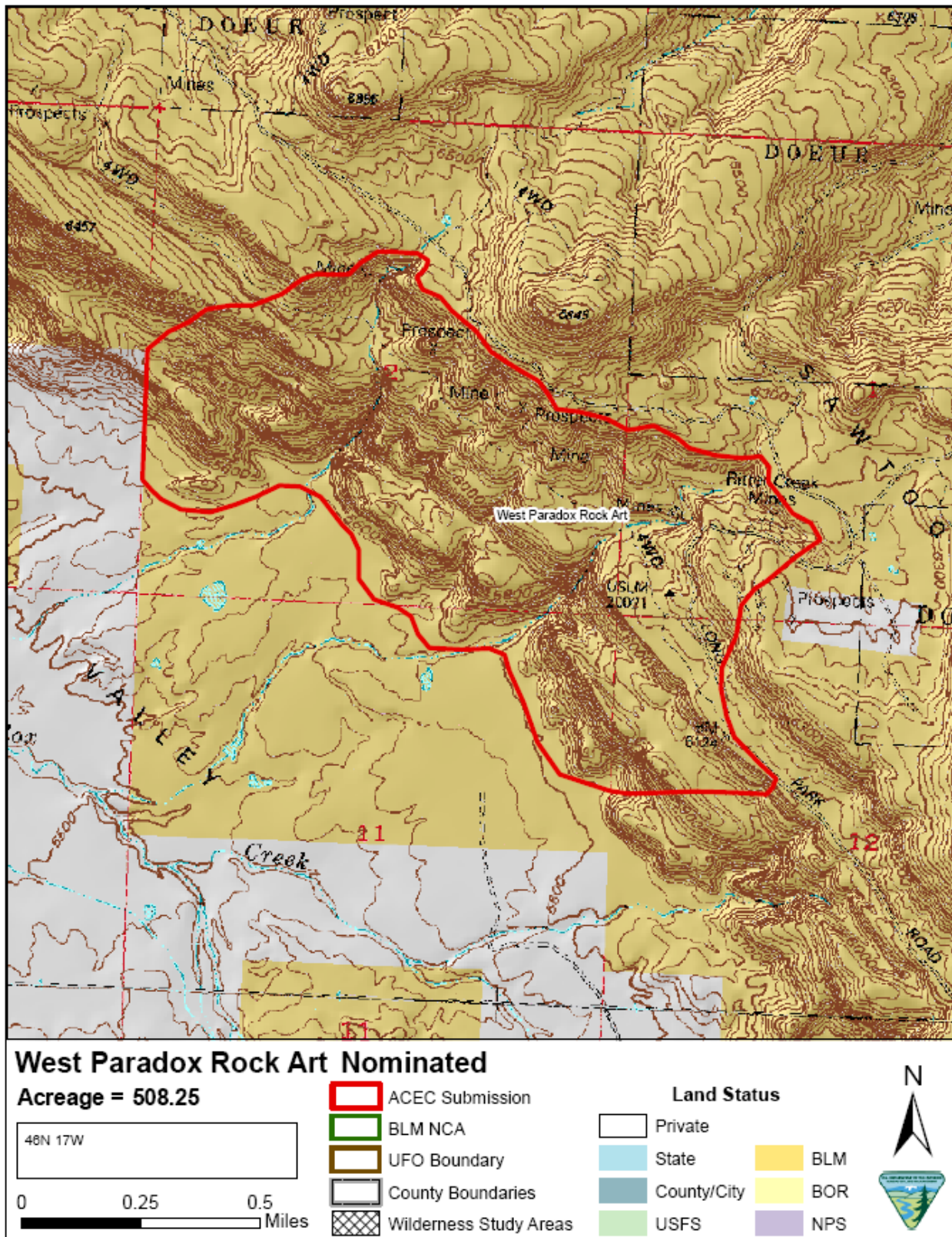
ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	Rare northern extent Anasazi rock art and occupation. VRI Class 2.

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	Inter-state and Regional significance due to Anasazi rock art.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	Fragile and irreplaceable if damaged.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 20 - West Paradox Rock Art Proposed ACEC



21. TABEGUACHE PUEBLO/TABEGUACHE CAVES PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Proposed

Proponent: WSERC, WCC

General Location: Montrose County, approximately six miles north of Nucla, CO, from the Uncompahgre National Forest to about two miles east of old Uravan; along Tabeguache Creek and Spring Creek, and areas in between.

Acreage: 26,286

Significance: The proposed ACEC contains important archaeological sites that show a relationship between the Fremont and Anasazi cultures. There is some evidence of farming (corn production).

Description: The proposed ACEC includes part of the Tabeguache Special Management, and west to Spring Creek Mesa. The Tabeguache Pueblos and Tabeguache Caves are important both to the prehistory of the region and to the history of archaeology in Colorado, being some of the earliest explored and described archaeological sites in the state. In addition to their historic interest, both Tabeguache caves and the pueblos still contain intact archaeological deposits dating to the Formative period Anasazi, or Ancestral Puebloan people.

Values Assessed: Cultural

Relevance Criteria Considered: 1

Importance Criteria Considered: 1 and 2

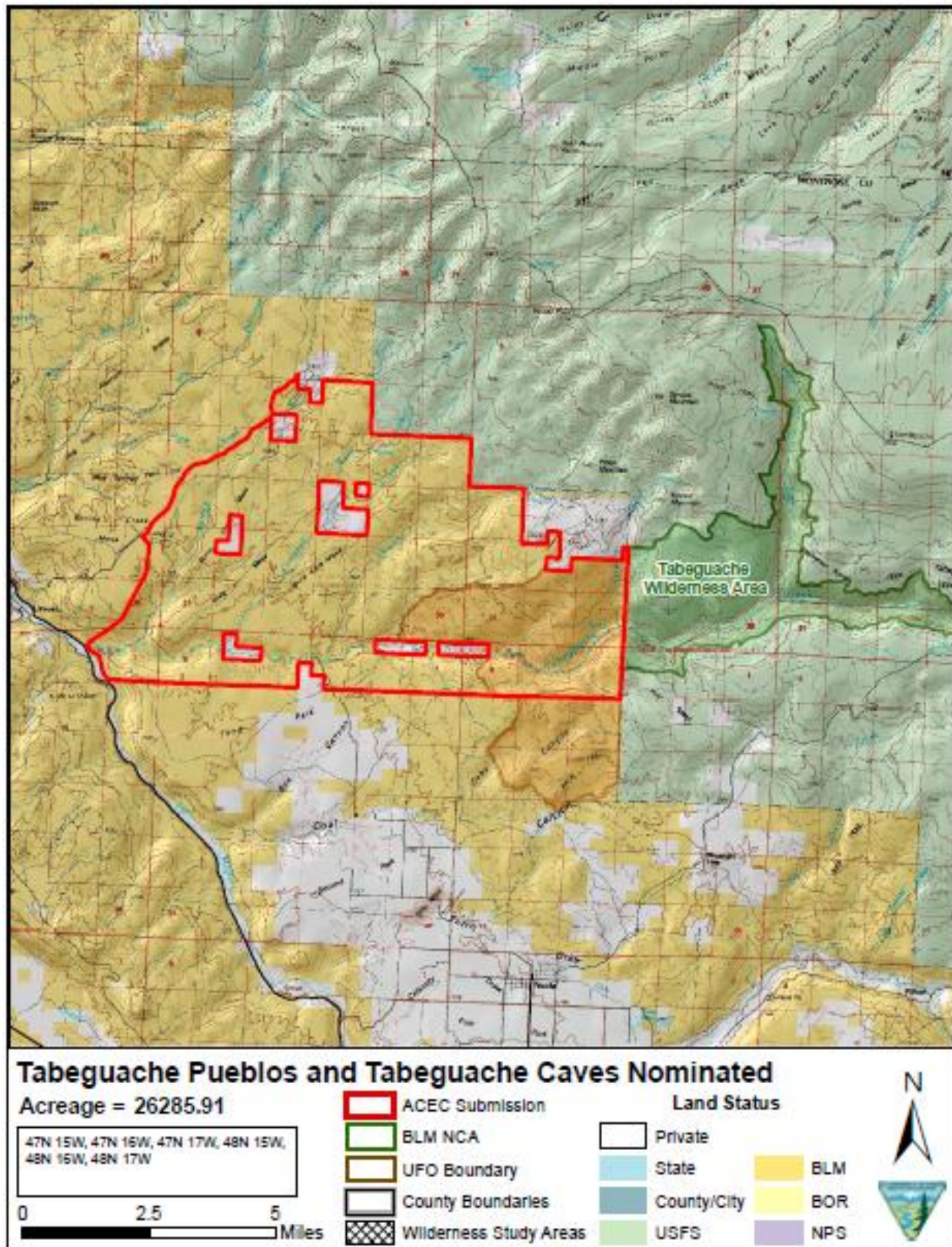
ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	Contains important archaeological sites that show a relationship between the Fremont and Anasazi cultures

IMPORTANCE CRITERION		YES/ NO	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
#	Description		
1	Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.	Yes	The area is important to the history of archaeology in North America.
2	Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.	Yes	The archaeological sites are fragile and irreplaceable if damaged.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 21 - Tabeguache Pueblo/Tabeguache Caves Proposed ACEC



22. YOUNG EGG LOCALITY PROPOSED ACEC

Status: Withdrawn from further consideration.

Proponent: CNAP

General Location: Approximately one-half mile east of the Gunnison River and two miles west of highway 50, in the Dominguez-Escalante NCA.

Acreage: 120

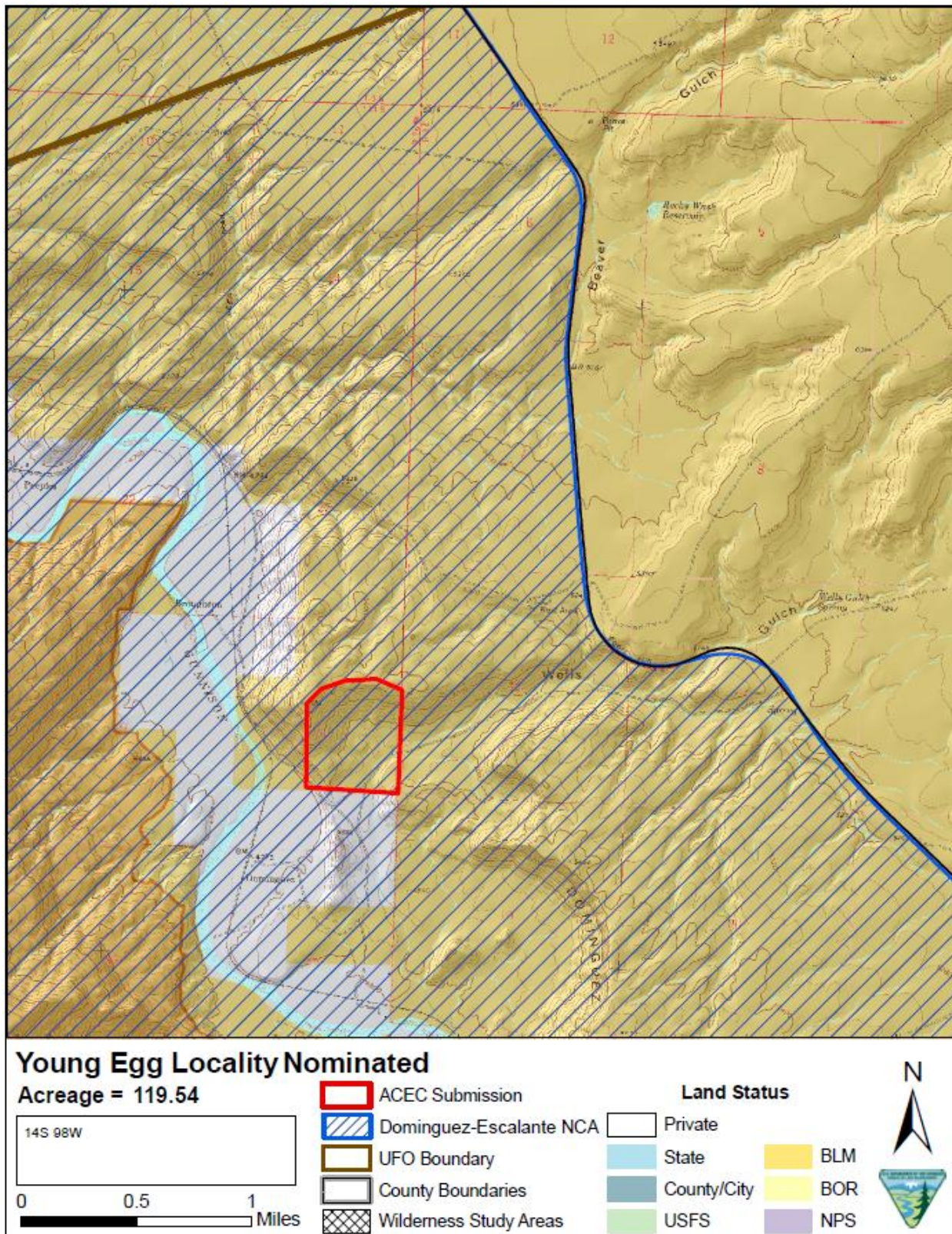
Significance of the Proposed ACEC: The proposed ACEC is a scenic area that consists of a section of the upper Jurassic Morrison Formation containing thousands of black eggshell fragments. The site represents a nesting site used repeatedly by dinosaurs.

General Description: The location of this proposed ACEC is at the mouth of Wells Gulch near the Gunnison River. It is within the Dominguez-Escalante NCA, which is not included in the Uncompahgre Planning Area.

Because it is outside of the planning area, the Young Egg Locality proposed ACEC will not be considered further in the Uncompahgre RMP.

ACEC IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE EVALUATIONS

ACEC Map 22 - Young Egg Locality Proposed ACEC



5.0 - INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM MEMBERS

The following Uncompahgre Field Office Staff participated in determining the relevance and importance of the nominated and existing ACECs.

NAME	TITLE
Amanda Clements	Ecologist
Lynae Rogers	Rangeland Management Specialist
Kurt Kubik	Rangeland Management Specialist
Lynae Rogers	Rangeland Management Specialist
Debbie Birch	Range Technician
Melissa Siders	Biological Staff Supervisor
Charles Sharp	Wildlife Biologist, T&E Biologist
Jeff Litteral	Hydrologist
Dan Huisjen	Fire Ecologist
Ken Holsinger	Natural Resource Specialist
Karen Tucker	Recreation Staff Supervisor
Julie Jackson	Recreation Planner
Amy Sharp	Recreation Planner
Glade Hadden	Archaeologist
Rob Ernst	Geologist
Teresa Pfifer	Land and Minerals Supervisor
Linda Reed	Realty Specialist
Thane Stranathan	Natural Resource Specialist
Bruce Krickbaum	Planner
Barbara Sharrow	Field Manager
Amanda Moore	GIS Specialist
D. Maggie Magee	Technical Writer Editor

6.0 - REFERENCES

Bureau of Land Management

- 1988 Manual H-1613, *Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*.
- 2000 Colorado BLM State Director's Sensitive Species List (Animals and Plants).
Webpage: http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Programs/botany/Sensitive_Species_List_.html
- 2007 *San Juan Public Lands Center Draft Land Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Durango, Colorado.
- 2008 *Moab Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan*. Moab Field Office, Utah.
- 2008b *Monticello Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan*. Moab Field Office, Utah.
- 2008c *Preparation Plan for the Uncompahgre Resource Management Plan*. Uncompahgre Field Office. Montrose, Colorado.

Colorado Division of Wildlife

- 2005 Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee, Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Conservation Plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado.

Colorado Natural Heritage Program

- 2009 Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Reports. Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

FLPMA

- 1976 Section 202 (43 US Code 1712[c][3]) Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Public Law 94-579, as amended.

National Audubon Society

- 2010 Important Bird Areas in the U.S. Available online at: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba>

StClair, Larry

- 2009 Email communication regarding lichens in Paradox Valley. Larry StClair, Brigham Young University, Utah.

7.0 - Appendices

Appendix A: UFO RMP Scoping ACEC Fact Sheet

4.3	BLM UNCOMPAHGRE FIELD OFFICE RMP PLANNING FACT SHEET <i>Areas of Critical Environmental Concern</i>	Barbara Sharrow, UFO Field Manager 2485 S. Townsend Ave, Montrose, CO 81401 Office hours are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Phone: (970) 240-6300 TDD (970) 240-6368 FAX (970) 240-6367

The BLM Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) is revising the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Uncompahgre planning area. The Uncompahgre RMP will provide detailed information about the current state of resources on public lands within the planning area, and set forth a plan of action for managing those resources for the next twenty or so years under the BLM's dual mandate of *multiple use* and *sustained yield*.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, commonly known as *ACECs*, are public lands where special management is required in order to protect the area's values. To be eligible for designation as an ACEC, an area must meet criteria for both *relevance* and *importance*. An ACEC possesses significant historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish or wildlife resources (including habitat, communities, or species), natural processes or systems, or natural hazards. In addition, the significance of these values and resources must be substantial in order to satisfy the importance criteria.

ACECs IN THE PLANNING AREA

The Uncompahgre planning area contains four ACECs, which were designated in the two existing RMPs:

ACEC	AREA (ACRES)	VALUES
Fairview	374	Large population of a listed endangered plant species and significant populations of a candidate plant species
Needle Rock	83	A volcanic geological structure with high-value scientific, interpretive, and scenic characteristics
Adobe Badlands	6,383	Consists of Mancos Shale hills and flats which, through wind and water erosion, have formed unique scenic formations. The area's soils are highly erodible and saline, resulting in high sediment loads and very saline runoff. The area also contains known and potential habitat for several endangered and threatened plant species.
San Miguel	22,841	Unique, high quality riparian vegetation resources, the scenic values of the corridor, and preservation of relic riparian communities



PROTECTING SIGNIFICANT VALUES

Restrictions arising from ACEC designation are proposed during the final RMP revision and are part of the final decision process. Restrictions are designed to protect the values and/or serve the purposes for which the designation was made. Management prescriptions are developed expressly to protect the important and relevant values of an area. Such measures would not be necessary or prescribed if the critical and important features were not present.



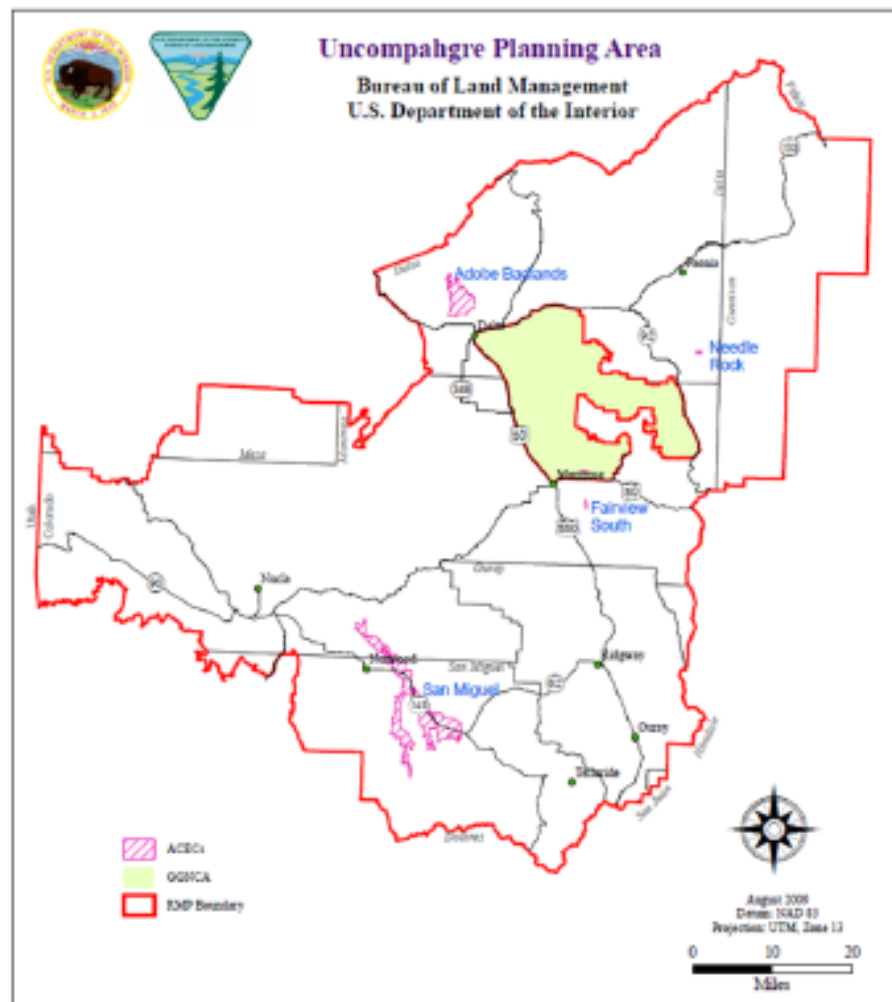
RMP Scoping ACEC Fact Sheet - Page 2

REVIEW OF NEW AND EXISTING ACECs

As part of the RMP revision, existing ACECs will be reevaluated to determine whether:

- the ACEC's relevant and important values are still present and require continued management attention
- threats of irreparable damage to the values have been identified
- current management is sufficient to protect the values.

In addition, new ACECs nominated during the public scoping period will be evaluated for relevance and importance.



Appendix B: UFO RMP Scoping ACEC Display Panel





**Draft Evaluation of Proposed and Existing
AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN
for the Uncompahgre Planning Area**